

F. Hargrave

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REFLECTIONS
ON THE GOVERNMENT OF INDOSTAN.
WITH A SHORT SKETCH
OF THE HISTORY OF BENGAL,
FROM MDCCXXXVIII TO MDCCLVI;
AND AN ACCOVT
OF THE ENGLISH AFFAIRS
TO MDCCLVIII:
BY LUKE SCRAFTON ESQ. *K*

LONDON, PRINTED MDCCLXIII
REPRINTED BY W. STRAHAN IVN.
FOR G. KEARSLEY, IN LVDGATE STREET,
AND T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND,
MDCCLXX



REFLECTIONS ON THE GOVERNMENT OF INDOSTAN. ETC.

LETTER I

Sir,

In obedience to your repeated commands, I am now set down to give you such an account of the revolutions in Bengal, as my memory and the papers I have by me will enable me: But, first, I find it necessary to give you some account of the religion, customs, policy, and government of the native Indians, and their conquerors the Mahometans; that, being familiarized to them, you may see the principles on which they act, and that the whole may appear a natural chain of events. I then propose to give you the history of Bengal, prior to the accession of Cheraujee al Dowla; and, lastly, the account of the unhappy catastrophe of all the company's settlements there, and of the several interesting events that followed. You must not expect a graceful diction, and ornamented style: I pretend to no other merit than a strict adherence to truth, and such observations as are the result of much conversation and intercourse with the natives.

First, of the religion and customs of the native Indians, whom I shall call Gentoos, agreeable to the common pronunciation. They pretend, that Brumma, the founder of their religion, was a being of so exalted a nature, as to be inferior only to GOD himself: of infinite knowledge, and all his words were truth. From the conduct of mankind, as recorded in the histories of other countries, I incline to think, this Brumma was one of those great geniuses, which Providence, from time to

time, bestows on mankind for the improvement of their happiness: such were Confucius, Zoroaster, and I might add Peter the Great, who, had he appeared in a less enlightened age, would, I doubt not, when time had cast a veil over his failings, have been as much revered among the Russians, as these men were in their respective nations. They date the existence of Brumma many thousand years beyond our account of the creation. Possibly their chronology is no better founded than that of the Chinese; yet they have undoubted claims to remote antiquity; for the earliest accounts we have of them, represent them as cultivating all the useful arts in great perfection; and to judge by their slow progress among us, this seems to be the work of ages. Perhaps these eastern countries, peopled in the infancy of the world, never degenerated into that state of barbarism in which we were so long involved; the soil and climate were propitious to mankind, and the mind was a stranger to the fiercer passions, which arose from the stimulating necessities of our more northern climates. The Bramins say, that Brumma, their law-giver, left them a book, called the Vidam, which contains all his doctrines and institutions. Some say the original language in which it was wrote is lost, and that at present they only possess a comment thereon, called the Shahstah, which is wrote in the Sanscrit language, now a dead language, and known only to the Bramins who study it. In this they are taught to believe in one supreme Being, who has created a regular gradation of beings, some superior, and some inferior to man: in the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments, which is to consist of a transmigration into different bodies, according to the lives they have led in their pre-existent state. This is all I know of their doctrine on these two important subjects; and this is believed by the most learned of the Bramins. But, from
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an opinion that sensible objects were necessary to make this intelligible to the vulgar, these doctrines have been taught in allegory: hence images were made of the supreme Being, according to the particular attribute they would express; his power, by an image with many hands and swords, his wisdom by an elephant's head, and so for the rest: and this is the principal source of all idolatry; for the explanation being lost, in process of time the images became themselves the objects of their worship; and as the knowledge of the Sanscrit language is confined to a few of the most learned Bramins, these alone possess the magic lanthorn, from which they reflect what objects they please; and though all the Gentoos of the continent, from Lahore to Cape Comorin, agree in acknowledging the Vidam, yet they have greatly varied in the corruptions of it: and hence different images are worshipped in different parts; and the first simple truth of an omnipotent Being is lost in the absurd worship of a multitude of images, which, at first, were only symbols to represent his various attributes. This is all I shall venture to say on their doctrinal points; but their customs are reckoned part of their religion, being sanctified by the supposed divine character of their legislator. If conjectures are permitted, I should suppose, that Brumma was king, as well as legislator, over all the continent of India, and that the chief points he had in view, were, to attach the people of India to their own country, and to render sacred whatever customs he thought necessary to be observed in such a climate: Hence their veneration for the three great rivers which water all the country, the Indus, the Kistnah, and the Ganges; and hence also their veneration for the cow, a creature most essentially necessary in a country where milk is the most wholesome food, and where oxen are so useful in cultivating the land. But the custom which distinguishes the Indians from

the rest of mankind, is the division of the natives into tribes.

The four principal tribes, are the Bramins, Soldiers, Labourers, and Mechanics. These are again subdivided into a multiplicity of inferior distinctions. There are Bramins of various degrees of excellence, who have the care of religion allotted to them. These are held sacred by the rest: they swear by their heads; they kiss their feet; and the Bramins have the entire government of their minds; and such as do not follow any worldly pursuits, are supported by the rest, which is a great burden upon the land. It is difficult to draw a general character of the Bramins, as they vary so much in their pursuits, and in their degrees of knowledge. Some I have conversed with, acknowledge the errors that have crept into their religion, own one supreme Being, laugh at the idolatry of the multitude, but insist upon the necessity of working upon the weaknesses of the vulgar, and will admit of no doubt of the divine character of their legislator. Talk to them of the truth of the Christian religion, they say, "They believe it is all very true; but that God
" has given different laws, and ordered different forms
" of worship for different nations, and has prescribed
" them theirs, which their forefathers have practised for
" many thousand years, and they have no reason to doubt
" its being acceptable." For this reason they admit no converts, nor are themselves ever converted, whatever the Roman missionaries may pretend; except indeed the Hal-lachores, of whom I shall speak hereafter, who are glad to be received into a society where they are treated as fellow-creatures. But I much doubt whether there ever was an instance of any other of the Indians being converted by the missionaries; and even these do no honour to the Christian religion, for as far as my observation has reached, these half Christians are the most abandoned profligate

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profligate wretches of the human species. But to return to the Bramins, some few there are, who, versed in their learned languages, soar above the vulgar; but the generality are as ignorant as the laity. Such who are not engaged in worldly pursuits, are a very moral superstitious innocent people, who promote charity as much as they can to man and beast; but such who engage in the world are generally the worst of all the Gentoos; for, persuaded the waters of the Ganges will purify them from their sins, and being exempted from the utmost rigour of the courts of justice, under the Gentoo governments, they run into the greatest excesses.

The Soldiers are commonly called Rajah-poots.* These inhabit chiefly the northern provinces. And it is from hence I conjecture, that the founder of their religion was also king of the whole continent, and that he sent off this tribe to govern the rest; for in all the southern provinces, the rest of the inhabitants are quite black; and the family that govern, are a fair-complexioned people, of the colour of those of the northern provinces. These Rajah-poots are much more robust than the rest, have a great share of courage, and a nice sense of military honour, which consists, among them, in fidelity to those they serve. Fighting is their profession, and they readily enter into the service of any that will pay them, and will follow wherever he leads; but as soon as their leader falls in battle, their cause is at an end, and they run off the field without any stain to their reputation.

The Labourers are next in rank. This tribe includes farmers, and all who cultivate the land. And the mechanics include merchants, bankers, and all who follow any trade. These again are sub-divided into each profession. And now I must mention the Hallachores, whom I cannot call a tribe, being rather the refuse of all the

* Persons descended from Rajahs.

tribes. These are a set of poor unhappy wretches, destined to misery from their birth. They perform all the vilest offices of life, bury the dead, and carry away every thing that is polluted. They are held in such abomination, that on the Malabar side of India, if they chance to touch one of a superior tribe, he draws his sabre, and cuts him down on the spot, without any check, either from his own conscience, or from the laws of the country. How the legislator could let such an injustice enter into his system, I can no otherways account for, than by his supposing a necessity of a regular gradation; and that he was obliged to sacrifice a portion of his people, to preserve the purity, or that wherein he defined purity to consist, of the rest. All the different tribes are kept distinct from each other, by insurmountable barriers. They are forbid to intermarry, to cohabit, to eat with each other, or even to drink out of the same vessel with one of another tribe; and every deviation in these points, subjects them to be rejected by their tribe, renders them for ever polluted, and they are thence-forward obliged to herd with the Hallachores.

It does not enter into my plan to give you a detail of all their religious follies and ceremonies; which, if you are curious, you may find amply described in Mr. Picart's collection of religious ceremonies. Let it suffice, that amidst all their errors they agree in those truths which form the harmony of the universe, that there is ONE SUPREME GOD, AND THAT HE IS BEST PLEASED BY CHARITY AND GOOD WORKS. Their worship and ceremonies at the great temple of Jagernaut seem instituted to remind them of this; for there the Bramin, the Rajah, the labourer, and mechanic, all present their offerings, and eat and drink promiscuously together, as if they would insinuate, that all those distinctions are of human invention, and that in the sight of God all men are equal.

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equal. This division into tribes has had two effects on the whole nation. It has occasioned such a disunion among them, as has always made them an easy prey to every invader; for no man thinks of defending himself, unless he is of the soldier's tribe: and hence it is, that the invaders, who, like Alexander, came in on the northern frontiers, inhabited mostly by Raja-Poots, have always met a very brave resistance, while those who came in from the sea, of which more hereafter, have met with very little. But it is the same distinction also, which has preserved the manufactures among them, maugre all the revolutions and all the oppressions introduced by the Mahometans; for while the son can follow no other trade than that of his father, the manufactures can be lost only by exterminating the people.

Their legislator has even ordained different kinds of food to the different tribes; but whether this was founded in policy, or in a real persuasion of the doctrine of the Metempsychosis, I will not pretend to say. The Bramins touch nothing that has life; their food is milk, vegetables and fruit; and if you shew them through a microscope the insects on a leaf, invisible to the naked eye, they say it is a deceit, that the objects are in the glass, not in the leaf. The soldiers are permitted to eat venison, mutton and fish. The labourers and mechanics are different according to their sects and professions; some are confined to milk and vegetables; others are permitted fish, but nothing further; the privilege of eating flesh is confined entirely to the soldiers, and in general, almost without exception, they are remarkable for a temperance that borders on abstemiousness. Another circumstance that contributes to form their general character, is, their marrying when infants; and yet no women are more remarkable for their conjugal fidelity, in which they are distinguished beyond the rest of their sex, by that remarkable

able custom of burning with their husbands. Many authors ascribe this to have been instituted to prevent their wives poisoning them; but I am well persuaded, they often submit to it from a nice sense of honour and conjugal affection. Let it be considered, they are brought up together from their infancy; the woman has no opportunity of ever conversing with any other man; her affections are centered solely in this one object of her love; she is firmly persuaded, that by being burnt with him, she shall be happy with him in another world; that if she neglects this last token of affection, he may take another wife, and she be separated from him for ever. However false these principles, yet, if those poor women are persuaded they are true, you must allow they are powerful motives. No doubt they are likewise influenced by the disgrace of surviving him; for they are then condemned to a perpetual widowhood, and from mistress of the family, degraded to the state of a menial servant. This affords but an unhappy prospect; whereas, their burning themselves is thought to reflect great honour to the family, and there is no doubt but the dying husband recommends it to her in his last moments. Thus their minds raised to the utmost pitch by this strange commotion of love, grief, and honour, they go through the terrible trial with amazing fortitude. The practice is far from common, and only complied with by those of illustrious families. Nor is it on this occasion only that the Gentoos meet death with fortitude. The men are equally ready to resign their lives to preserve their religious purity; of which we had last year a remarkable instance in three Bramins, who had their daughters forced from them by a Mahometan, beyond the reach of justice: they complained to the governor of the province, but finding no redress, they all swallowed poison, and died at the door of his tent. Also, when
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the forces came from Madraſs, by the unexpected length of the paſſage, they were greatly reduced for proviſions, inſomuch that there was no rice left for the Gentoo ſeapoys*, and nothing to ſerve out to them but beef and pork; but though ſome did ſubmit to this deſilement, yet many preferred a languiſhing death by famine to life polluted beyond recovery. The Mahometan governors often take advantage of this, when they want to extort money from them; and though they will bear the ſevereſt corporal puniſhment, rather than diſcover their money; yet, when once their religious purity is threatened, they comply, if the ſum is in their power; if not, and the man is beloved by his tribe, they make a ſubſcription to raiſe the money. Fortitude on theſe occaſions is common to all of them, even thoſe who in other dangers appear of moſt daſtardly ſpiritleſs diſpoſitions. Such you ſee is the force of principle, that it has preſerved its efficacy through a ſeries of ages. And when we conſider the dreadful penalties annexed to any deviations from what their religion ordains, we ſhall ceaſe to wonder at the little change that appears among the Indians, compared with the earlieſt accounts we have of them.

There is no forming a general character for ſo vaſt a tract of country, extending from Cape Comorin in the latitude 6, to Lahore in 30. The whole of it is divided into little principalities, many of which being tainted with the diſſolute manners of their conquerors, afford a variety of characters, differing according to the climate, the tribes and the government. But in juſtice to the Gentoo religion and cuſtoms, I muſt ſay, that, before the late wars between the French and us in the Carnatick country, which is chiefly divided into little Indian Rajahſhips, human nature in no part of the world afforded a finer ſcene of contemplation to a philoſophic mind: Every

* Natives diſciplined like Europeans.

thing seemed calculated to promote agriculture and manufactures.

The fruitfulness of these hot countries depending entirely on their being well watered, and the rainy season being here of very short duration, the preservation of the water is a principal object: For which reason the high lands are mounded in by great banks to collect the water that falls from the mountains; and these reservoirs are kept up by the government for the public benefit, every man paying for his portion of a drain. The roads are planted with rows of large trees, which add to the beauty of the country, and afford a pleasing and refreshing shade; and every two or three miles are stone-buildings called Choultrys, for the convenience of travellers, who always find Bramins attending to furnish them with water: And so free is the country from robbers, that I doubt there having been an instance of one in the memory of man. The diamond merchants, who generally pass this country, have seldom even a weapon of defence, owing to that admirable regulation, which obliges the Lord of that spot where the robbery is committed, to recover the effects, or make good the value. At the extremity of every town or village are large groves of trees, where the weavers carry on their manufactures, and, if the soil will admit, there is a handsome stone reservoir, called a Tank.

In the capital of every considerable district is generally a large temple or pagoda, some of them most stupendous buildings, all of stone, the outside from top to bottom adorned with little images, representing the histories of their gods, and too often their amours, full as bad as any of the ancients. These pagodas are generally built by the Rajahs, or rather by successive generations of them, for some of them appear to be the work of ages. They consist of several courts, which contain
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places for their idols, and apartments for their Bramins, of which there are some thousands, who have generally the revenues of a tract of country assigned them for their support.

The Bramins, who in other respects have perverted the doctrine of their founder, have however strongly inculcated the virtue of charity, by teaching them how much it will contribute to their happy transmigration. Happily for the country they have grafted a vanity on this virtue, which promotes and extends its good effects. It is the height of their ambition to have a temple or choultry called after their name, and reflects more honour to their children, than if their parents had left them immense wealth.

What greater proof need we of the goodness of the government, than the immense revenue their country yields; many of the Gentoo provinces yield a revenue in proportion of extent of country equal to our richest countries in Europe; and yet, like us, they have no mines, but draw their wealth from the labour of their hands. Such was the Carnatic before it was ravaged by our late wars. And I have been told, that the Gentoos of the northern provinces still preserve the Gentoo purity and simplicity uncontaminated; but they indeed were never properly subdued: The successors of Tamerlane made fierce and constant war upon them, but always met with a vigorous and brave resistance, and were at last convinced it was better to have them as a kind of tributary allies than enemies. Ehbar Shah was the first who entered into a treaty with them; his example was followed by succeeding emperors; and they long proved an excellent barrier against the Afghuans and the northern Tartars: But when the emperors degenerated into lewd monsters and tyrants, they forsook their alliance, and thenceforward the empire was exposed
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to the invasion of the Mharattas, the Persians, and lastly, of the Afghuans.

The most extensive Gentoo government is that of the Mharattas, who have now almost overturned the whole empire, of which more when I come to speak of their government and history. I shall only observe here, that they have vastly deviated from the true Gentoo character. The military spirit that has prevailed among them for the two last centuries, has utterly corrupted their manners; their manufactures are totally neglected; commerce is banished; and their Rajahs have laid waste their own country by their oppression, almost as much as that of their enemies, while the generals of their army and their soldiery are grown immensely rich by the plunder of more than half of the Mogul empire. There are a number of Rajahships interspersed throughout India, which by the advantageous situation of the country, have either never been subdued, or are only tributary to the Mahometans, preserving their own religion and laws: Such is the Rajahship of Tanjour, the Rajah of which two years ago repulsed the veterans of France, commanded by lieutenant-general Lally.

We read in ancient authors, that the Brachmans, who I incline to think were a set of philosophers rather than the tribe of Bramins, excelled in astronomy, and were famed all over the world for their learning. It is very possible they had just pretensions to that character; but in all these eastern countries, if any man possesses any secret of nature, he only considers how he shall make use of it to delude the ignorant multitude, and attract their veneration; and therefore the key of the Arcana is trusted to very few. For example, I was amazed to see, that the Bramins could foretel an eclipse; and yet ask them the nature of it, and they tell you an absurd story of a dragon laying hold of the sun, and they teach the
people

people to run into the river and make all the noise they can, which they persuade them will frighten the dragon away. This led me to enquire into it, and I found that they are possessed of a list of eclipses calculated for some thousand years to come. Now, whoever made this list must certainly have known the motions of the heavenly bodies, whereby it was occasioned; but it is the system of the Bramins, that the vulgar are to be governed only by taking advantage of their ignorance: Therefore we are not to wonder at the excesses they run into in judicial astrology, which they carry indeed to the highest degree of folly. Their almanac, composed by the Bramins, has not only a planet or genius that presides over every day, but over every hour, every minute, and every action; nor do they enter on any new undertaking, without consulting it, and it requires a concurrence of fortunate circumstances to form a lucky minute. Some days are fit for going to the north, others to the south; some days are so entirely taken up by evil spirits, that they abstain from all manner of business; and a clap of thunder at once breaks their resolutions, let the almanac say what it will: So that between the Mahometan and Gentoo astrologers together, one half of the year is taken up in unlucky days. The head astrologer is ever present at all their councils; no new enterprize is begun without his being first consulted; and his veto is as effectual as that of a tribune in the Roman senate; the stress they lay on this really makes it of great consequence, and the general who should march an army against the opinion of the astrologer, would be as much condemned, as the Roman general who fought, though the chicken would not feed.

After having said so much on the customs and religion of the Gentoos, I think I may venture to say on the whole, that the Gentoos, uninfluenced by the Mahometans,

metans, are a meek, superstitious charitable people, a character formed by their temperance, customs, and religion. They are almost strangers to many of those passions that form the pleasure and pain of our lives. Love, at least all the violent tumults of it, is unknown to the Gentoos, by their marrying so young, and by the little intercourse they have with other women; ambition, is effectually restrained by their religion, which has, by insurmountable barriers, confined every individual to a limited sphere; and all those follies, arising from debauchery, are completely curbed by their abstaining from all intoxicating liquors. But from hence also, they are strangers to that vigor of mind, and all the virtues grafted on those passions which animate our more active spirits. They prefer a lazy apathy, and frequently quote this saying from some favourite book: "It is better to sit than to walk, to lie down than to sit, to sleep than to wake, and death is best of all." Their temperance, and the enervating heat of the climate, starves all the natural passions, and leaves them only avarice, which preys most on the narrowest minds. This bias to avarice is also prompted by the oppression of the government, for power is ever jealous of the influence of riches. The Rajahs never let their subjects rise above mediocrity; and the Mahometan governors look on the growing riches of a subject as a boy does on a bird's nest; he eyes their progress with impatience, then comes with a spoiler's hand, and ravishes the fruit of their labour. To counter-act this, the Gentoos bury their money under ground, often with such secrecy as not to trust even their own children with the knowledge of it; and it is amazing what they will suffer rather than betray it: When their tyrants have tried all manner of corporal punishments on them, they threaten to defile them; but even that often fails; for resentment

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ment prevailing over the love of life, they frequently rip up their bowels, or poison themselves, and carry the secret to the grave; and the sums lost in this manner, in some measure account why the silver in India does not appear to increase, though there are such quantities continually coming into it, and none going out of it.

The Gentoos of the lower provinces are a slight made people. Rice is their chief food. It seems to afford but poor nourishment; for strong robust men are seldom seen among them. Though the people in general are healthy, yet they rarely attain to any great age, which is in some measure made up to them by an early maturity. They are married in their infancy; and consummate at fourteen on the male side, and ten or eleven on the female: and it is common to see a woman of twelve with a child in her arms. Though a barren woman is rare among them, yet they bear but few children; for at eighteen their beauty is on the decline, and at twenty-five they are strongly marked with age: The men indeed wear something better, though they also are on the decline after thirty. Thus the spring of life is but of short duration, and the organs decay before the faculties of the mind can attain to any perfection. Is nature then deficient? Surely not. We always see the organs of the body suited to the climate; nor do I know a stronger or more active race of people than the Mallays, who live mostly within six degrees of the equinoctial: We must rather look for it in that early indulgence in venereal pleasures, their excessive abstemiousness, their sedentary way of life, and, in Bengal and the conquered provinces, in the dejected state of their minds, oppressed with the tyranny of their conquerors. No wonder then, that with such customs, such bodies, and such minds, they fall an easy prey to every invader.

OF THE MOORS.

The word Moors is used by us to express the Mahometans of all sects and countries who are settled in India. It is indeed necessary to have some general word; for whether Pytan, Persian, or Tartar by birth, it matters not, the enervating softness of the climate, soon forms but one common character of them, the distinguishing qualities of which are perfidy and sensuality: But it will be, nevertheless, necessary to trace their progress to that character, and to distinguish the various nations they come from, before they are melted down into the common mass.

The Moors of India have the following origins.

The Arabs, who came from the Persian gulph, settled at Massulipatam; from thence made conquests of the open country up to Dehli, to which they gave a race of kings, who were expelled by Tamerlane and his successors; but they appear to have founded various colonies in different parts, who still subsist, and are called Pytans.

The Afghans, who came from Candahar and the mountains that divide Persia from Hindostan, are also called Pytans; but whence the word is derived, or why the appellation should be common to both of them, I will not pretend to ascertain. The Tartars, or the Mungul Tartars, who came in from Bochara and Samarcand with Tamerlane, are commonly called Moguls. The same name is also given to the Ousbeg, Calmuc, and other tribes of Tartars, who are continually coming in, as a kind of adventurers, as well as the Persians, who, since the destruction of their own empire, seek a refuge at the courts of the Mogul and the Nabobs of the provinces. These, with the slaves they have brought up to their own religion, compose the

the whole body of Mahometans, whom we blend together, under the general denomination of Moors; and who, though not in number the hundredth part of the natives, yet, by the division of the Gentoos, keep almost the whole in subjection. Of these, the Moguls are in possession of the throne of Dehli, and most of the principal governments and employments dependent thereon.

If we would come at their true character, we must look for it in their education. Till the age of five or six, the boys of rank and family are left entirely to the eunuchs and women; and from the fondness and tenderness of their management, they first acquire a delicacy of constitution, a timidity, and an early tendency to the pleasures of the seraglio. They are then provided with tutors, to teach them the Persian and Arabic languages; and, at this early age, they are brought into company, where they are taught to behave with great gravity and circumspection, to curb every motion of impatience, learn all the punctilious ceremonies of the eastern courts, to say their prayers in public, and every exterior of devotion; and it is astonishing to see how well a boy of eight or nine years old will acquit himself in company. They are also taught to ride, and the use of arms, and are furnished with their shield and sabre, and a little dagger at their waist, which is called a cuttarry, the principal use of which, is to stab on occasion. When the hours of school and company are past, they return to the seraglio, and the parents never scruple to admit them to all their plays and diversions, at which are exhibited representations of every thing that is beastly and unnatural, not in a manner to excite horror, but merely to afford diversion. Nothing ever shocked me more than to see the insensibility of the parents, in exposing such scenes to the tender minds of their children.

The slaves and women of the seraglio wait with impatience the first appearance of desire to debauch them, unknown to the parents, and this manner of education continues till thirteen or fourteen, when they consummate their marriages, which are made by their parents in their infancy, and a separate household is formed for them. They are then forbid their father's seraglio, are permitted to see none but their mothers, nor has the father even the permission to see his daughter-in-law; and from that time, that dissimulation, which they learnt from the father's lessons and examples, is practised between father and son, and too often a jealousy arises between them, which their history shews frequently ends in blood. This is the general education of all the great, and there are few exceptions; the poor and middling sort are only curbed by the shortness of their finances; for as soon as they acquire money, they tread in the steps of their superiors. Here, then, you see the seeds of that perfidy and sensuality, which are the distinguishing qualities of an Indian Moor; qualities, that would long since have destroyed the whole race of them, had they not been continually supplied with new recruits from their original country.

The Pytans, as I said before, are settled in numerous colonies in the interior of India, and chiefly in the barren and mountainous parts, and appear to be the descendants of those Arabs, who came in from the gulph of Persia, whose power was broke by Tamerlane and his successors; but such, who had got possession of any country difficult of access, maintained themselves there, and their descendants are the best soldiers of the empire, but are detested by the Moguls, who look on them to exceed themselves in perfidiousness and cruelty. They make a trade of hiring themselves out, and if they have an opportunity, make no scruple of dethroning the power

power which hires them. As to the Afghan Pytans, they seldom continue here, they only make incursions for plunder, and return with their booty. The Ousbec, Calmucs, and the various tribes of Tartars, who come to settle here, when they first arrive, are a bold, hardy, martial people. Their rusticity, and the barbarity of their manners, are greatly derided by the old standers. They generally bring a good horse with them, and are sure to be taken into service, for they are reckoned more faithful than other Mahometans. They begin as a simple cavalier, and are perferred by degrees, till some of them come to great commands. At first they abhor the sensuality and effeminacy of their masters; but by degrees their native manners wear off, they adopt the luxury they despised, they marry the women of the country, and their children or at the utmost their grandchildren, have nothing remaining of their Tartar origin; like our English hounds, when sent abroad, the first breed of which retains some little of the qualities of a hound, but the next are no better than curs.

The Persians are but a small number; and on account of the fairness of their complexion, and their politeness, are favourably received at court, the great men being desirous of marrying them to their daughters, that they may keep up the complexion of their family; for degenerate as the Moors are, they are proud of their origin, and as the Mungul Tartars are a fair complexioned people, a man takes his rank in some measure from his colour. As to the slaves bred up to the Mahometan religion, they are much such a race as the converts the Portuguese make to their religion; they are destitute of all the commendable qualities of the Gentoos, and acquire only the bad ones of the Mahometans. I am sensible I have altogether given the Moors a detestable character; and I am sorry to say it is so universally true, that I never knew above two

or three exceptions, and those were, among the Tartar and Persian officers of the army, whose native manners were not yet utterly corrupted.

Hospitality is, I think, the only virtue they can pretend to. It seems to be a refuge from the oppression of the government; and many of them scruple a breach of faith with any man they have entertained under their roof. By this you would think friendship was a sacred bond among them. True, it is ever in their mouths, but rarely in their hearts, and it is a word seldom used but to deceive. Their friendship like their devotion is all ostentation; they will drink a dram in the intervals between each prayer, though all spirituous liquors are forbid by their laws, and they will stab while they embrace you; for which reason the great men never embrace but on the left, that the person they embrace may not come at their dagger with their right hand. The Mahometans in other parts of the world are enthusiasts to their religion; but here the sects of Osman and Ali never disagree about who was the lawful successor to the caliphate, if they agree about the succession to the government they live under. There are but few mosques, still fewer priests, and the great men, though, by habit, vastly punctual in their private devotions, rarely go to the public mosques.

The Moors may be divided into two characters; those who aspire at power, and those who are in possession of it. The former are brave, active, vigilant and enterprising, sometimes faithful to the party they engage with; but once in possession of power, they seem to have sought it only to abuse it, by making it subservient to their sensuality. The charms of the seraglio at once disarm them, they abandon themselves to their pleasures, and seem to be fattening themselves up for a sacrifice to some one that possesses those qualities themselves have lost.

Having

Having said thus much of their character, I shall endeavour to explain how government can subsist with so little virtue.

As I before observed, the universality of the Gentoo religion throughout the continent should imply, that there also subsisted an universal empire; but no accounts we have of India go far enough back to prove it; for in Alexander the Great's time, it appears to have been divided into great Rajahships, whose Rajahs were continually at war with each other. Then ensues a long chasm in our knowledge of them. When the Portuguese first rounded the Cape of Good Hope, they found, that the Arabs had made several conquests along the sea shore, and had even penetrated along the open country up to Dehli. As they must have come by sea, it is highly probable their force was not very great; and their progress must have been owing to the intestine wars of the Rajahs. When Tamerlane came in, he overpowered them with mighty armies; but though he is called conqueror of India, he seems to have conquered only the open country. That vast tract of country, from the Indus to the Ganges, was unsubdued; nor had he made any great progress in the eastern provinces; and it was not till the time of Aurengezebe, that the Tartar arms penetrated into the Decan and Carnatic; and even he did not make a perfect conquest of them, for he was on an expedition against the Mharattas when he died. Thus the Tartar conquest was never perfect; for their government was so weakened, by the various struggles for the succession, on the death of every emperor, but more by their abandoning themselves so totally to the pleasures of the seraglio, that it never took any deep root; and even two thirds of what they had conquered, was still left in the hands of the old Rajahs families, in consideration of their paying a certain sum annually to the viceroys appointed by the Mogul over

each particular province. Thus the Mahometan laws never extended further than the capital cities; and even there the old customs were still regarded. This is one happy effect of the tenaciousness of the Gentoos to their own religion; for had they turned Mahometans, they would indeed have been the most abject and wretched of the human species.

I am amazed to see, that all the writers have asserted, that there are no laws in this country; that the land is not hereditary; and that the emperor is universal heir. I am ready to allow, there are no written institutes; no acts of parliament; and that there is no power to controul the emperor; but I must assert, that they proceed in their courts of justice by established precedents; that the lineal succession, where there are children, is as indefeasible here as in any country that has no check on the supreme power; and that the emperor is heir to none but his own officers. Although the Tartars, from their roving life in their own wild country where they live in tents, require few laws, and no settled police, yet they could distinguish the use of them in the countries they conquered; and accordingly, both in China and India, they made no innovation, so that the old Gentoow laws still prevail. The most immutable of these is the hereditary right to all lands, which even extends to the tenants. The lord of the manor has an uncontested right, as long as he pays the usual tax to the government; so also the tenant under him cannot be removed while he pays his lord the usual rate; and the sum at which each acre is valued, as also the taxes to the government are wrote and preserved in the county books, and can never be exceeded. These laws were wisely instituted, as barriers against oppression, and were general, except for the demesnes of the crown, which on the expulsion of the great Rajahs families, fell to the Tartar conqueror; and for the Jaghire lands, which

which are lands bestowed by the crown out of its demesnes to the Omrahs, for the support of their forces, which, on the death of the possessor, revert to the crown; but even this regards only the lordship of the lands; for under these the right of the tenants is indefeasible.

These laws continued in full force, till the invasion of Nadir Shah; and till that time there was scarce a better administered government in the world. The manufactures, commerce, and agriculture flourished exceedingly; and none felt the hand of oppression, but those who were dangerous by their wealth or power: but when the governors of the provinces found the weakness of the Mogul, and each set up for sovereign in his own province, although they would not break through these immutable laws, they invented new taxes under new names, which doubled or trebled the original ones, and which the land-holder was obliged to levy on his tenants. The old stock of wealth for some time supported this; but when that failed, and the tenants were still pressed for more, they borrowed of usurers at an exorbitant interest; and the government still continuing these demands, the lords of the land were obliged to do the same; but as all this while the value of the lands did not increase, the consequence was, that, at last, unable to pay the interest of the mortgages, the rents were seized by rapacious usurers. The government finding the revenues fall shorter every year, at last sent collectors and farmers of the revenues into the provinces. Thus the lord of the land was divested of the power over his country, and the tenants exposed to merciless plunderers; till the farmer and manufacturer finding the more they laboured, the more they paid, the manufacturer would work no more, the farmer cultivate no more, than was necessary for the bare subsistence of his family. Thus this once flourishing and plentiful country, has in the course of a few years, been reduced to such misery, that
many

many thousands are continually perishing through want. The crown lands are still worse off; let out to the highest bidder, the farmer of them looks no farther than to make the most of his short time; and the Jaghire lands alone remain unplundered. Hence that equal distribution of wealth, that makes the happiness of a people, and spreads a face of chearfulness and plenty through all ranks, has now ceased; and the riches of the country are settled partly in the hands of a few usurers, and greedy courtiers, and the rest is carried out of the country, by the foreign troops taken into pay to maintain the governors in their usurpation. This unhappy decay the India company have already experienced, in the decline of their trade, and rise of the price of their manufactures, and will, I fear, experience more and more annually.

I would always have you carry in your mind, that these grievances have arisen only since the invasion of Nadir Shah, from the disproportionate number of forces kept up by the revolted governors, whose necessities have led them into these oppressive measures, and not from the nature of the government: for, till within these very few years, merchants were no where better protected, nor more at their ease, than under this government; nor is there a part of the world, where arts and agriculture have been more cultivated, of which the vast plenty and variety of manufactories, and rich merchants, were proofs sufficient.

Unhappily for the Gentoos, themselves are made the ministers of oppression over each other; the Moormen, haughty, lazy, and voluptuous, make them, of whom they have no jealousy, the ministers of their oppression, which further answers the end of dividing them, and prevents their uniting to sling off the yoke; and by the strange intoxication of power, they are found still more cruel and rapacious than their foreign masters; and what

is more extraordinary, the Bramins still exceed the rest in every abuse of power, and seem to think, if they bribe God by bestowing a part of their plunder on cows and Faquirs, their iniquities will be pardoned. Yet at the same time, they serve their tyrants with fear and trembling. There is no further connection between them than the use they are of to each other. The Gentoo, cool, deliberate, and indefatigable in application, is urged on by the prospect of enriching himself, while his master finds means and leisure to give himself up to the delights of his seraglio: But as his profuseness is still more than his minister can supply, in his first exigence he seizes on him, and puts him to the torture to discover his secret hoard. If the sum he gets by this means answers his expectation, he reinstates him in his former authority; if not, he cuts off his head and puts another of the same stamp in his room. Thus all money affairs are in the hands of the Gentoos. Not only those of the government, but every Moorman of rank and every merchant has his Gentoo agent, who keeps his accounts, and is the petty tyrant over his tyrant's slaves. Thus much for the management of the revenues.

With respect to the executive part depending on power, the government of the Moors borders so near on anarchy, you would wonder how it keeps together. Here every man maintains as many armed men as the state of his finances will admit, and the degree of submission is proportioned to the means of resistance; and the grand mystery of their politics is to foment this disunion. Whenever any subject becomes formidable either by his wealth or power, they prefer the silent execution of assassination to that of public justice, lest a criminal, publicly arraigned, should prove as a standard for the seditious to repair to.

Loyalty and patriotism, those virtuous incentives to great and noble actions, are here unknown, and when they

they cease to fear, they cease to obey; but to keep their fears and mistrusts in perpetual agitation, whole legions of spies are entertained by the government; these are dispersed all over the country, and insinuating themselves into the families of the great, if they engage in any plot, are sure to betray them, but oftner give false information against the innocent for the sake of reward. The person informed against, ignorant whence the information comes, in self-preservation informs against his nearest friends. Thus mutual good faith, the bond of society, is broke, and treachery and suspicion embitter every hour of their lives; but still such measures answer the end of the government, as far as the inspection of the supreme power extends; but in all these great unwieldy empires, they have no check on the distant provinces; and a governor has no sooner taken the oath of allegiance, than he plots how to break it with security. In vain are all precautions, where there is no check but fear; whatever calls the Emperor from the centre of his dominions, affords the opportunity of a revolt; and this is the source of all their revolutions. Money is here, if I may so express myself, the essence of power; for the soldiers know no other attachment than their pay, and the richest party soon becomes the strongest.

Another principal cause of the frequent revolutions in this country is, their strange error in the government of their armies. One would expect to see good sense in their military establishment at least. Their whole force is divided into great commands, and the pay is issued from the treasury to the respective generals. Hence the soldiers regard only the man from whom they receive their pay, and are intirely at his devotion, except indeed the Emperor's or Subah's body-guard which he pays himself, and he only endeavours to keep a kind of balance of power among those great officers; he does not study to attach the whole

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to himself, only a majority, the rest he awes with his power, and makes them fight from fear; and, what is more extraordinary, he keeps his troops greatly in arrear, from a mistaken notion, that they will be true to him, from the fear of losing their pay. The consequence is, that if the invader offers fair, he wins over the general officers to him, and a revolution is at once effected; or else they refuse to take the field, till their arrears are paid, and perhaps the treasury is too low to satisfy them, and by this delay, the enemy have time to gather strength; and finally, when the day of action comes, they draw their swords but faintly, having no great motive to inspire them with courage, while the invaders are pushed on by the hope of reward and plunder. On the other side again, when the Emperors or Subahs have secured a majority of their general officers, and desire to dismiss a part of their force, they absolutely refuse the pay that is justly due to them, and make them and their soldiers quit the country, or perhaps follow them with a body of troops, and cut them in pieces.

I now flatter myself, to have explained to you the sources of the frequent revolutions among these people. An Englishman cannot but wonder to see how little the subjects in general are affected by any revolution in the government. It is not felt beyond the small circle of the court. To the rest it is a matter of the utmost indifference, whether their tyrant is a Persian or a Tartar; for they feel all the curses of power without any of the benefit, but that of being exempt from anarchy, which is alone the only state worse than that they endure.

I am, etc,

LETTER II

Sir,

In the account I propose to give you of these countries, I shall confine myself to such particulars only as are necessary to give you a clear idea of the state of Bengal, prior to the fatal catastrophe which happened to all the company's settlements there.

The last conquerors of India were the Tartars under the conduct of Timur Beg, a fierce and warlike people, who, in the same century, over-ran China and Persia; but their posterity degenerated into a weak, effeminate race, incapable of maintaining the conquests acquired by the bravery of their ancestors; so that in China, they were soon expelled by the natives, till fresh irruptions of their uncorrupted countrymen again subdued them. The same in Persia, where the race of Tamerlane governed with great glory for some few reigns, till, enervated by the contagious softness of the people they subdued, they were unable to resist the invasion of a handful of mountaineers, who lately put an end to their race, in the death of Shah Houssein. In India their degeneracy has been still more flagrant. Who can trace the martial hardy Tartar in the weak degenerate posterity of Tamerlane, from Aurengezebe to Mahomed Shah? As well might we seek for Roman virtue in Caracalla, Heliogabalus, and those monsters who reigned in the decline of the Roman empire. When Nadir Shah invaded them, they were indeed ripe for destruction, and he wisely judged he could not leave the government in weaker hands than those he found it in: He knew well, a monarch like Mahomed Shah, lost to all sense of glory, and immersed in the Circæan pleasures of a seraglio, was not to be animated by so noble a motive as a just revenge. His judgment proved too true;
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a stupid languor succeeded that terrible storm; all looked on the empire as a ship in distress; and, instead of vigorously exerting themselves to save her, they left her to be dashed to pieces; every one strove to seize a portion of the wreck: The governors of the provinces immediately threw off their dependence, or at least kept up but a mock shew of it, reserving to themselves the revenues of the provinces, to strengthen them in their usurpation. The Rajahs too, who mostly possess the woody mountainous countries, secure in their situation, once more threw off a yoke they had always borne with impatience; and thus was the mighty empire rent in pieces by the Persian invasion, nothing remaining to the emperor but the provinces from Dehli to Lahore.

I shall go no farther back than the year 1725, when Bengal was governed by Soujah Caun; who, for his zeal and fidelity to the crown, had been rewarded with the investiture of this government in his own family; and his authority then extended over the provinces of Bengal, Bahar and Orissa; the two last he governed by his deputies, and kept his court at Muxadavad in the center of the province of Bengal.

Some time before his accession, two Moguls, brothers, named Hadjee Hamet and Allyvherde Caun, came to Bengal powerfully recommended by some of the principal Omrahs at court, and were received into his service; the former as an officer of the foot soldiers, who immediately attended his own person, the other as his Hookah, or pipe-bearer. Hadjee Hamet had in his younger days been at Mecca, which is implied by the title of Hadjee, given to all those who have made that pilgrimage. This alone is a great recommendation in a country so distant from a place, which by the Koran all Mussulmen ought to visit once in their lives; and a reputation for sanctity is the best disguise for an ambitious

tious man, among a people so full of enthusiasm as are all the followers of Mahomet : It gave him an easy introduction to the great, which he well knew how to improve : he soon discovered his master's ruling passion to be an unbridled lust after women. To this he made his court, and saw himself in the road to greatness ; but was conscious of a weakness which might prove an invincible obstacle to his pursuits, the want of that martial courage so indispensibly necessary in a country where no one is esteemed but by his merit as a soldier. That, he knew his brother possessed in an eminent degree. He therefore determined to labour for his advancement, resigning to him the glory of command, and contenting himself with indulging an ardent thirst after riches. Fame and dominion were the darlings of his brother's more exalted soul. Thus, necessary to each other, they united those qualities which might have commanded success in a much greater enterprize. Hadjee well knew, that where the object of our pursuit is itself criminal, crimes are the steps by which we must ascend ; no retreat, no listening to the voice of nature ; the passions themselves must be subservient, and conscience hushed. Thus resolved, he is said to have made a sacrifice of his own daughter to the lust of his master. Admitted a favourite, he lifted his brother from one step to another, till, in the year 1729, he obtained for him the Nabobship of Patna, where Allyverde Caun soon made himself very powerful ; for, partly by policy in setting the Rajahs of that warlike province at variance with each other, and partly by the success of his arms, he brought them to an entire submission, making them pay their tributes, and yet attaching them to his service : In the mean time Hadjee, as prime minister, had acquired great riches, both for himself and his master ; but not chusing to depend entirely on the
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the frowns or smiles of another, and perhaps suspecting jealousy might be struggling with affection in his master's bosom, he eyed Patna as a secure retreat; and by bribes among the great men at Dehli, he privately, in 1736, obtained a Phirmaund, or royal grant, for his brother to hold the government of Bahar, independent of Bengal. This could not be so secretly transacted, but enough transpired to excite the jealousy of the Soubah, who was probably meditating revenge, when, in 1739, death surprised him. His only son Suffraz Caun succeeded him in his government, as well as in his designs against the brothers; but when the means were considered, he saw the artful fabric they had raised had too firm a basis for him to shake. Hadjee was in his hands; but he could not look on his brother's power without trembling: Awed by that, he determined to wait a more proper season, and Allyvherde, checked by his brother's being in the Soubah's power, durst not attempt any thing against him; so both determined to dissemble. Allyvherde filled his letters with protestations of loyalty and submission, as the Soubah did his with assurances of the confidence he had in him. As the courtiers and soldiers were mostly enemies to the brothers, it is possible the Soubah might in time have executed his purpose; but, indulging himself in excessive debauchery, even to that degree as to disorder his faculties, he soon rendered himself odious to his people, and lost the affections of those who might have supported him. But nothing hurt him so much as a disgrace he put on Jagutseat, the greatest banker, and perhaps the richest subject in the world. Hearing that his son Seat Martabruy was married to a young lady of exquisite beauty, he insisted on a sight of her; all the father's remonstrances were in vain; he persisted, and even sent people to force her from his house; saw her, and sent her back, possibly uninjured;

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injured; but the very seeing her, in a country where women are kept concealed, was an injury never to be forgiven. The crafty Hadjee rejoiced in an event that seemed likely to add so powerful a family to their party: He immediately tendered his own and his brother's services to revenge the dishonour, which were readily embraced, and they brought over likewise one Al-lumchand, who had been a faithful servant to the father, and would have been so to the son, but had incurred his displeasure by representing too freely the ill consequences of his excesses. They had a conference, the issue of which was, that Allyvherde should march from Patna; that they would endeavour to win as many of the general officers to their party as they could; and, if they were successful, that Allyvherde Caun should have the Soubahship. But the former obstacle remained, Hadjee was still in the Soubah's power. Seat and Al-lumchand undertook to get him removed to Patna, and that even by the Soubah's desire. Accordingly they represented to the Soubah, "That Hadjee was tampering
" with the general officers, that it was dangerous to
" keep him at court, and more so to attempt his life;
" but, that, as he was no soldier, and could not add to
" his brother's strength, it was therefore most expedient to send him to Patna." The betrayed Suffraz Caun fell into the snare, and Hadjee received his dismissal with great joy. He soon joined his brother, and, by his artful eloquence, so glossed over the crime with the flattering expectations of future greatness, that Allyvherde, who else had probably been content with the authority he possessed, was dazzled by the splendor, and saw not that he undertook the death of his benefactor's son. Hadjee gave him no time to relent. The resolution was no sooner formed than executed, and in December 1741, Allyvherde began his march;
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first writing to the Soubah, "That he was oppressed
" with grief to find he had so many enemies at court,
" who, by their misrepresentations, had persuaded
" him to disgrace his brother, that he was coming
" to fling himself at his feet, and prove himself his
" loyal servant." The Soubah, roused from his delu-
sive slumber, would have taken vigorous measures;
but the same traitors assured him, "He had nothing
" to apprehend from Allyvherde Caun, who had
" only a few troops with him; that if he would give
" them leave to assure Allyvherde in his name, that
" he would restore his brother to favour, and that he
" was convinced of his fidelity, that Allyvherde
" would march no farther." The Soubah was again
deceived, and Allyvherde, by this delay of a few days,
had time to gain the passes which divide Bengal from
Bahar, where a few men might have checked his
progress. The Soubah upbraided his counsellors with
their treachery, who pleaded, that themselves were
deceived; and he was now to put his life and govern-
ment to the hazard of a battle. Their forces were
nearly equal, each army consisting of about thirty
thousand men: But it was but the last day of his life
that he was to experience how few were faithful to him:
His chief reliance was on his artillery, little suspecting
his master of the ordnance, who, after a few dischar-
ges without shot, went over to the enemy, and was
followed by many others. Of all his commanders,
Muffet Cooley Caun, Gose Caun, and Bauneer Ally
Caun, alone remained faithful to him. The two lat-
ter were killed. Muffet Cooley fought his safety in
flight, and would have persuaded the Soubah to do
the same, and his elephant-driver undertook to carry
him safe to the city; but he cried, "He scorned
" to give way to the rebels," and rushed with his

guards into the thickest of the enemy, where, by his great efforts, he kept the event for some time dubious, till overpowered by numbers, he yielded to the superior fortune of his rival. Muffet Cooley Caun fled for Cuttack, of which he was governor; while Allyvherde, joined by Suffraz Caun's army, entered Muxadavad March 30, 1742, and soon shewed he wanted only a just title to make him worthy of this high station. Contrary to the general practice, he shed no blood after the action, contenting himself with putting Suffraz Caun's children under gentle confinement.

His first act was, to send for Hadjee, whom he had left at Patna, that he might have the assistance of his superior judgment in maintaining what his own bravery, directed by his brother's counsels, had acquired; and having rewarded his party with the posts lately filled by his adversaries, distributed part of his treasure among them, and received the submission of the Rajahs and all the great men, he took the field, with a select body of Pattans added to his forces, under the command of Mustapha Caun, a general of distinguished merit: then appointing his brother governor in his absence, he began his march against Muffet Cooley Caun, who was in Cuttack with the remains of Suffraz Caun's party: After a short and unsuccessful resistance he fled with all his followers to Decan, and never more disturbed the Soubah.

He had but a short time to indulge himself in the pleasing thoughts of being in quiet possession of the three provinces, when he was suddenly alarmed with an invasion of eighty thousand Mharattas, who, entering over the Berbohim hills, made it doubtful whether he could reach his capital in time to preserve it.

It is necessary I should here inform you who the Mharattas are, and what their pretensions in Bengal.

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Every body in any degree versed in the history of India must know, that the kingdom of Decan and coast of Malabar were never entirely subdued. The Rajah of Sittarah, commonly called the Sou Rajah, a corruption of the family name of Sehoo, put himself at the head of a confederacy of the independent Rajahs, who possess all the country called the promontory of India, from Ganjam west to Guzzerat: And Aurengezebe, finding all his endeavours to conquer them in vain, and that they harassed the Decan and other provinces bordering on their territory, was at last glad to make peace with them on their own terms. These were, the independent enjoyment of the above countries, exclusive of the port of Surat, and the quarter part of the revenues of Decan, for which a certain sum was stipulated, which was called the chout: But the treaty was never strictly observed on either side. When the emperors had no other wars on their hands, they refused to pay the chout; and when there were any intestine divisions in the Mogul empire, the Mharattas never failed to extend their boundaries; till gathering new strength, as the Mogul's declined, they encreased their demands to the chout of the whole empire, to which the weak emperors were obliged to submit. This year the Sou Rajah sent to demand the chout. The emperor, brought to the last state of imbecillity by the invasion of Nadir Shah, and unable either to resist or comply, proposed to them, among other expedients, to send a force against Allyvherde Caun to receive the revenues of the two last years; send his and his brother's heads to court; and reinstate the family of Sujah Caun. The Mharattas gladly embraced a proposal which seemed to insure them the conquest, or at least the plunder of three rich provinces.

As their force consists solely of light horse, they made such rapid marches, that their arrival was the first notice the Soubah had of their intentions; and he was then unfortunately at the very extremity of his territories. By forced marches he reached the province of Burdwan; but finding the enemy must be up with him should he attempt to join his brother, he there intrenched himself, and was soon surrounded by the Mharattas, who, though superior in number, did not attempt to force him. Boscar Pundit, the Mharatta general, now sent a messenger to acquaint him with his demands; which were, the revenue due to the crown, the chout of the two last years, the treasures of Soujah Caun and Suffraz Caun; and that for the future the Sou Rajah should have officers of his own to collect the chout in every district of the three provinces. The intrepid Allyvherde, exasperated to hear such haughty terms, boldly resolved to fight his way through the enemy, and join his brother. He put himself at the head of the Pattans; who, animated by his example, and the promise of reward, charged with such fury, that they soon cut their way through the enemy, and gained the high road to the capital. They were followed by the whole Mharatta army for three days together, till at last they reached the town of Cutwa, where happily the river was fordable; and here his situation admitted of a little rest: But when he formed his forces for passing the river, he found them reduced to no more than three thousand Pattans; the rest of his army, consisting mostly of Bengal troops, the worst soldiers in the empire, had taken the opportunity, while the enemy was employed against the Pattans, of marching off towards Cuttack. The Soubah now saw, that the dangers past were far short of those in prospect; but, master of himself
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at all times, he betrayed no sense of fear, and he gave his orders with a chearfulness which was to his troops a certain omen of success.

There was one pass only by which the Mharattas could come to attack him, before he gained the river: This he gave in charge to Mustapha Caun, assisted by Zaindee Hamet Caun, Hadjee's eldest son, and Meer Jaffier with eighty Pattans, with orders to maintain it till the whole army had crossed the river. The Mharattas, imagining the Soubah proposed to continue at Cutwa till joined by his brother, stood for some time astonished at the desperate attempt; but when they saw his army in the river, enraged to see their prey escape out of their hands, they attacked the defile with the best of their troops; but all their efforts were in vain against the brave Pattans, who obeyed their orders with the loss of half their number, and joined the Soubah with the rest on the other side of the river; and, in this memorable affair, Meer Jaffier is said to have killed ten Mharattas with his own hand. Their valour was amply rewarded by their generous master, who, on his arrival at Muxadavad, presented Mustapha Caun with ten lacks of roupees *, and the rest in proportion. The Soubah upbraided his brother in the severest terms for his cowardice, in not coming to his assistance; who pleaded, that, giving him over for lost, he employed his time in fortifying the city, which the Soubah found sufficiently strong against an army which had no cannon. He had now struck

* The rupee is a silver coin, struck in the *Mogul's* mints, with an inscription of his name and titles, the year of his reign, and the place at which it was struck. It weighs from 7 *dwt.* 10 *gr.* to 7 *dwt.* 11 *gr.* and the proportion of alloy to fine silver, is as 1 or 2 to 100. One hundred thousand rupees make a lack, which is equal to 12,500 *l.* sterling, one hundred lacks a crore, one hundred crores an arrib.

such a terror into his enemies, and had so well established his character as a soldier, that the Mharattas, not daring to attempt the city, contented themselves with ravaging the country all around, till the approach of the rains obliged them to retire back into the Burdwan province, and put an end to their operations.

The Soubah, on his accession, had ordered large levies of troops in the province of Bahar, so that in October, the rains being over, he again took the field at the head of fifty thousand men. The Mharattas also increased their strength by the desertion of Meer Hubbib from the Soubah's party, who carried some cannon with him. He had been deputy governor of Dacca, but being called to the Soubah's court, to answer to some crime laid to his charge, he rather chose to trust himself with the enemies of his country, than abide the resentment of an injured master; and his great knowledge of the country made him very useful to them.

I shall not tire your patience with an account of the many skirmishes and military operations of the campaign; but in general observe, that the Mharattas, agreeably to their usual practice, would never venture a general action, but endeavoured to bring the Soubah to terms by harassing his troops and plundering his country. The Soubah sent to offer peace; but the Mharattas, to their former terms, added that of the resignation of his government to Suffraz Caun's eldest son. Provoked at this, the subtle Hadjee tempted his brother to try what treachery could effect. A conference was proposed and accepted. A tent was pitched between both armies; and Boschar Punditt, relying on the Subah's oath on the Koran for his personal safety, advanced with thirteen of his general officers; The tent was double, and lined with armed men, who, on the signal given, rushed on the unprepared Mharattas, and cut them to pieces in sight of their own army, who
breathed

breathed instant revenge; but the Soubah advancing at the head of his troops, struck terror into a multitude without commanders, and the Mharattas, by a speedy flight, disappointed him of his hopes of bringing them to a general engagement. The only revenge in their power, was, ravaging the country, which they did most effectually, burning the towns, and destroying the inhabitants, without regard to sex or age. The Soubah pursued them so closely, that he at last drove them back over the Berbohim hills, having killed many in different skirmishes, and taken a number of prisoners, and among the rest an officer of distinction, named Sarfarow, of whom I shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

The flattering prospect was but as a sudden calm, while the clouds gather together to return with greater violence; for advice was now, 1744, brought of a fresh army of Mharattas entering by the way of Cuttack, under the command of Ragojee, and of another by the way of Patna, commanded by Balajerow, general to the Sou Rajah; each of sixty thousand horse. But though independent of each other, they agreed to act in concert, and make an equal division of all plunder and advantages that might be obtained. The Soubah, who was returning from Berbohim, apprehensive of being inclosed, regained Cutwa by speedy marches, and proceeded to his capital, with a mind full of anxiety at the mortification of being obliged to leave his country exposed to merciless plunderers. He made such additional works to the city, as the short time would permit; and leaving it under the charge of Hadjee, he took the field again with an army of observation, composed of troops, whose bodies were half exhausted by fatigue, and their minds spiritless through despondency. But behold a dawn of hope! He soon traced the marks of discord between the two Mharatta generals, and by the mediation of Sarfarow, a conference was consented to by
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the Soubah and Balajerow, at which a peace was concluded on the following terms. The Soubah paid twenty-two lacks for the chout of the two last years; engaged to pay it regularly for the future; and, it is said, gave a large sum as a present to the general himself, who, on his part, promised to retire out of the country, and to assist in driving out the other Mharatta army also. Balajerow did indeed retire himself, but left the Soubah to fight it out with his confederate; who being no match for the Soubah, divided his forces into small bodies, and laid waste whatever had been spared by his predecessors, till the rains, and the Soubah's pursuit, once more drove them out of the country.

The next year they renewed the same scene; but the Soubah attacked them so closely, that he cleared the country of them early in march 1745, Orissa and Cuttack only remaining in their hands; and now he promised himself some respite, at least till the month of October. He this year appointed Zaindee Hamet Caun, Nabob of Patna, who set out for that province with a considerable body of troops, to prevent the incursions of the Mharattas, and awe the rebellious Rajahs of the province. About this time the Soubah first conceived a jealousy of the great reputation of his general Mustapha Caun, who by his bravery, and unlimited profusion to his Pattans, had made himself extremely beloved by them; crimes sufficient to render him obnoxious under a government depending intirely on military power, and where there is no medium between supreme command and abject slavery. The generous open temper of the man considered, I doubt much whether the Soubah's suspicions were justly founded; but his death was resolved on, and it was determined to assassinate him the first time he came to court. Mustapha was too much beloved to have it kept a secret from him. To be warned was sufficient

sufficient to be safe. His first thoughts prompted him to revenge, which he was powerful enough to execute, but could not resolve to spill the blood of a man he once loved. He rather chose to quit the country with his Pattans, and was followed by Sumseer Caun, at the head of a considerable body more. They took their route towards Bahar, intending to pass through that province into their own country.

The brothers, alarmed at so great a defection, and sensible no enemy is so dangerous as an injured friend, but above all, apprehensive of their joining the Mharattas, by great rewards and greater promises, attached the rest of the Pattans to them, and the Soubah immediately marched in pursuit of them. The Pattans, not suspecting any pursuit, had marched but slowly, and were overtaken near Patna. Receiving advice at the same time, that Zaindee Hamet Caun was marching from that city toward them, they instantly determined to face about and attack the Soubah, whose forces were little superior to their own. The battle began with the most promising appearance of success for the Pattans, till Mustapha Caun, borne away by the torrent of his passion, endeavoured with too great impetuosity to penetrate that part where the Soubah was, but met with a resistance equally brave, and received his death's wound from an arrow lodged in his eye. The Pattans, as if their general was their only source of life and courage, instantly fled, and with their general Sumseer Caun, reached their own country.

The brothers never escaped a greater danger; and in the frenzy of their joy, forgetting the great services they had received from the unfortunate Mustapha, they shamefully exposed his remains, to be carried in an ignominious manner through the streets of Patna.

The Mharattas in this and the following year, 1746, 7, again renewed their incursions. All the Soubah could
do,

do, was, to cover the country to the east of the Ganges; north and west from Cuttack to Rajahmant lay desolate and uncultivated. Indeed they were not so numerous; the country that had been so long exposed to them, would no longer support such vast armies. But while his attention was taken up by them, a greater, and more unexpected misfortune befel him. The fugitive Sumseer Caun returned, the beginning of this year, at the head of seven or eight thousand Pattans, on a project concerted between him and Meer Hubbib, for the plunder of Patna. Of this Hadjee had some intelligence, and hastened to assist his son with his counsels. Sumseer Caun arrived on the opposite side of the Ganges, within a few hours march of the city, and wrote a letter to the Nabob of Patna, feigning contrition for what was past, and desiring his intercession with the Soubah to restore him to favour. Hadjee advised to try the same stratagem, which had been so successful against Boschar Pudnitt; but his son, whether from scruple or fear, hesitated and returned for answer, that he was not impowered to promise him pardon, but had wrote to the court in his behalf. The orders soon arrived, which were to follow his father's instructions. The Soubah, at the same time, the better to deceive the Pattans, wrote Sumseer Caun, he gladly accepted his services, and pressed his march to Muxadavad. This proposal Sumseer Caun made use of to cross the river, giving out he intended to march on to Bengal. Both parties desired a conference with the same treacherous views. It was settled they should meet on a plain before the city, where a tent was pitched, under which Hadjee had contrived to sink a mine, which was to be fired as soon as Zaindee Hamet Caun retired. Sumseer came at the time appointed, attended by a chosen band; each party endeavoured to conceal their designs, by most exaggerated assurances of mutual friendship. On
Zaindee

Zaindee Hamet's rising to take his leave, Sumseer Caun and his followers drew their sabres, and cut down the Nabob and those that attempted to defend him. In this confusion the mine was neglected, and the Pattans advanced and entered the city with the fugitives, where they took old Hadjee prisoner, as he was attempting to escape in disguise. No stratagem, no wily art could avail. After suffering every indignity which wanton cruelty could suggest, he was severely scourged, and mounted on an ass, with his legs tied under the belly, and thus was led the same tour he himself had appointed for Mustapha Caun. Fresh tortures were then inflicted on him, and more were in reserve, till one of his guards, pitying his great age and sufferings, conveyed him a dose of poison, which put a period to his miserable life.

Thus Hadjee Hamet deservedly met the same doom himself had sentenced others to, and gave the world an instance more of the incompatibility of wickedness with happiness.

Allyverde Caun was for some time inconsolable for this misfortune. In his brother he lost the faithful pilot, who had successfully steered the vessel, in which their common fortunes were embarked, through all the storms and dangers of usurped authority; and in Zaindee Hamet, the prop and staff of his declining years, to whom he had given one of his daughters in marriage, and whom he had destined for his successor in the Soubahship, of which his great merit rendered him every way worthy. But fresh dangers soon roused him from his lethargy. Agreeable to the plan concerted between Sumseer Caun and Meer Hubbib, the Mharattas now entered the country by the Berbohim pass, while Sumseer Caun advanced with his Pattans towards the Soubah, who had already taken the field, to revenge his brother's death. His first step was to endeavour, by forced marches, to prevent their junction. The three
armies,

armies, thus marching towards each other, met at Boglepore, as at one common centre, which they all reached at the same time; but with this circumstance, that the Soubah found himself between their armies, both now ready to attack him. In this dilemma, his superior genius, ever fruitful in resources, suggested to him an expedient, which extricated him from the greatest danger he was ever yet exposed to. The Pattans, he knew, fought from a principle of revenge for the death of Mustapha, and from an attachment to their surviving master; but the Mharattas for plunder only: Leaving therefore his camp standing, he advanced briskly towards the Pattans, who stood him the hardest struggle he had ever yet been engaged in, but which ended in their total rout, by the death of their commander Sumseer. This stratagem had its utmost effect. The Mharattas, regardless of the views of their general, and unrestrained by military laws, instead of attacking the Soubah's rear, fell to plundering his camp, maugre all the exhortations of their officers. The Soubah, after the Pattans were once broken, instead of pursuing them, found the Mharattas plundering his camp in the utmost confusion. Thus, incapable of making any stand, they were totally routed with very little loss to the Soubah, who, thus revenged for the loss of his faithful brother and beloved nephew, returned to the capital.

The Mharattas never ceased their incursions, but kept him almost continually in the field; and the little respite he had, was fully taken up in contriving means to raise money to support the immense expences he was at in maintaining forces against them, to which he obliged every body to contribute: Nor did the European settlements escape, but, in 1747, were obliged to pay their quota; he observing always this policy, not to demand it of them all at the same time, as he wisely judged their union only could make them formidable.

At

At last, in 1750, a firm treaty was settled with the Sou Rajah, by which the province of Cuttack was given up to him, and the chout was settled at twelve lacks per annum; since which they have never molested these provinces. The only alarm he ever met with after this, was the march of Monsur Ally Caun, Visir of the empire, into the province of Bahar. I am not well acquainted with the motives of his coming; but he proceeded as far as Patna, and it is probable, if he had continued his march to Bengal, the Soubah's troops, awed with the pomp of royal authority, and indeed inferior in every respect, would not have drawn a sword for him. Whatever the Visir's intentions were, the intrigues carrying on against him at court, obliged him to return. Allyvherde Caun made him a magnificent present, and the Visir, in return, confirmed him in his Soubahship, on condition of his remitting yearly to court fifty-two lacks of rupees, in which he was afterwards very punctual.

We have seen this brave usurper struggling through difficulties, which nothing but the utmost constancy and intrepidity could surmount. Let us now follow him through the more pleasing scenes of domestic life, and public tranquillity. His great age, being now in his seventy-third year, the low state of his treasury, and the distressed condition of the provinces, which had been exposed to the Mharattas, and lay uncultivated, and the manufactures lost; all required the rest of peace, which, henceforward, it was his whole attention to preserve. I mentioned before, he had no sons of his own; he therefore treated as such the issue of Hadjee, who were Nowagis Mahmud Caun, married to his eldest daughter, Sid Hamet, and three sons of Zaindee Hamet. The eldest of Zaindee Hamet's sons, named Mirza Mahmud, a lad of seventeen years
of

of age, he adopted himself, and took into his family the youngest, named Merzee Mundee ; but the second, called Fazeel Cooley Caun, was adopted by Nowagis Mahmud Caun. Nowagis, the eldest of Hadjee's children, he made Nabob of Dacca, with the whole revenue of that rich province to maintain his court. Sid Hamet was made Nabob of Purhunea, with the enjoyment of its revenue, and Mirza Mahmud was made nominal Nabob of Patna. But the old man well knew, no Mussulman was to be trusted with the power annexed to that Nabobship, and therefore sent one Joninam, a Gentoo, as deputy governor, always observing to visit that province once a year himself : And having thus trusted the distant provinces to those he thought he could confide in, he in 1751, disbanded the greatest part of his forces, relying on his reputation in arms, to keep his neighbours in awe.

Until the year 1752, it was imagined he intended Nowagis Mahmud Caun for his successor ; but whether he thought his narrow genius unequal to the task of government, or was more particularly biaſſed by his great affection to Mirza Mahmud, he this year associated the latter in the government, declared him his successor, and procured him from court the title of Chiragëe al Dowla *. This was the signal of dissension ; and henceforward his court was a continued scene of feuds and animosities betwixt the contending parties. Most people who observed the strict union between the two nephews, that the eldest had amassed great riches, and, though a weak effeminate man himself, had for his prime minister one Hossein Cooley Caun, an able politician, and much esteemed by the army ; and the other nephew

* *Lamp of riches.*

I shall henceforward write Surajah Dowla, as nearest the common pronunciation.

possessed of a rich province, well secured by rivers and mountains, and daily increasing his forces; and compared with these the unpromising qualities of Surajah Dowla, who was continually immersed in debauchery, drinking to the utmost excess, chusing his companions from the dregs of the people, and giving every indication of a vicious and corrupt mind; most people, I say, little imagined the succession would ever fall to him. But, in 1754, the balance seemed to incline to him; for the Soubah determined in his favour, and, apprehensive Nowagis might prove too powerful for him, thought it expedient to deprive him of his chief support in Hossain Cooley Caun; but as his nephew was deputy-governor of Dacca, they began with him, lest Hossain Cooley Caun should suspect their intentions, retire to Dacca, and set up for himself. The conduct of this affair was left to Surajah Dowla, who chose for his instrument one Aga Saddoe, whose father was governor of Chittigong, but resided at Dacca. The son, an extravagant debauched youth, was then under confinement at Nowagis Mahumud Caun's palace, being left there as hostage, till he paid a large sum due for the revenues of his government. Surajah Dowla assisted him in his escape. He landed at Dacca the first of December 1755, and engaged his father in the enterprize, deluded probably by the promise of Surajah Dowla, to make him governor of Dacca. The father and son, with twelve of their dependants, surprized the governor in the dead of night; and, after some little resistance, in which the father was wounded, they cut off his head, and proclaimed it to be done by the order of Surajah Dowla: But the next day, an order arriving from Nowagis Mahumud Caun to seize Aga Saddoe, the great men of the city immediately assembled their forces, and at-

D

tacked

tacked him. The son, with some of his desperate followers, cut their way through their opponents, and made their escape; but the father, and the rest of their party, were killed. This news reaching the capital, the different parties were immediately in arms; but the old Soubah assuring his nephew, that Aga Saddoe had made this attempt entirely in revenge for his confinement, the weak, timid Nowagis was appeased, and the consequence was, that Surajah Dowla, a few days after, murdered Hossein Cooley Caun in the streets of Muxadavad. This pusillanimous conduct of Nowagis, made many quit his party, apprehensive of the same fate. The old Soubah now gave evident signs of his approaching end. Mens wishes and inclinations are apt to deceive their judgments. Surajah Dowla daily rendered himself more odious; and great reliance was had on the union of the two brothers. But Providence, for its own wise ends, favoured this youth with rapid success. Nowagis and Sid Hamet both died a natural death, within a month of each other; and Allyvherde followed them April 10, 1756, first giving Surajah Dowla the keys of his treasure, and declaring his desire that he should succeed him. I have before mentioned Surajah Dowla, as given to hard drinking; but Allyvherde, in his last illness, foreseeing the ill consequences of his excesses, obliged him to swear on the Koran, never more to touch any intoxicating liquor, which he ever after strictly observed. But the excesses he had already committed, had disordered his faculties to that degree, that he had ever after a disturbed imagination; sometimes frantic with passion, and cruel to those about him; then again caressing them on equally frivolous grounds; and all his words and actions betrayed a violent and uneven temper. Judges of human nature

nature will be apt to prognosticate his sudden fall from such symptoms ; yet he came to the Soubahship with the most flattering prospect. He had an army formed by his predecessor, a full treasury, and no competitors but the son of Sid Hamet, in arms in Purhunea, and an infant named Moradda Dowla, son to his brother, who had been adopted by Nowagis Mahumud Caun, and was now supported by his widow with a party which at first appeared formidable ; but the attraction of a full treasury soon won that party over, and the widow left alone, was received with the child into his own palace.

I am, etc.



LETTER III.

Sir,

I hope my preceding letter will have given you a clear idea of the government's affairs previous to the capture of Calcutta.

I shall now endeavour to trace the source of the Soubah's resentment to our nation, which, I apprehend, is one of those state-mysteries that die with their authors. Where nothing certain can be obtained, we must select the most plausible reasons from such transactions as come to our knowledge. I have made it my study since our intercourse with the great men at court, to penetrate into the cause of this event; but could never obtain any thing satisfactory. Some have told me, that the late Soubah, on hearing of the death of Nazir Jung, murdered by the intrigues of the French *, had frequently observed, that the Europeans were likely to conquer the whole country, and advised his grandson to keep a watchful eye over them. The present Soubah, on the other hand, affirms, that he used to compare the Europeans to a hive of bees, of whose honey you might reap the benefit, but that if you disturbed their hive they would sting you to death. Perhaps it is a vain research to trace the motives of a capricious tyrant. But the reasons Surajah Dowla assigned, appear in the terms he proposed to Mr. Watts; though the most probable motives were the hopes of an immense plunder, founded on a notion, that all the Rajahs and great men kept their riches in Calcutta: And as Calcutta had the

* See Cambridge's history of the wars on the coast of Coromandel.

reputa-

reputation of being a place of great strength, he hoped, by taking it, to strike a terror into his own subjects and into the neighbouring powers, that might facilitate his future enterprizes. But I shall leave you, Sir, to judge for yourself, and proceed to relate only such facts as were obvious to every body.

He was in full march against the Nabob of Purhunea, when suddenly, May 1757, from some unaccountable caprice, he returned to the city, and publicly declared his intention to extirpate the English; and without further delay he encamped his whole army opposite to the English factory at Cassimbuzar, and summoned Mr. Watts to surrender the place to him; at the same time sending him a beetle * as a token of friendship and assurance of personal safety. Mr. Watts having only five and twenty Europeans in garrison, and being sensible, that if he resisted, he exposed all the English effects in the Soubah's dominions to be immediately seized; that at the utmost he could not hold out above a day or two; and finally, ignorant of the cause of the Soubah's displeasure, obeyed the summons: But, contrary to promise, the Soubah immediately made him prisoner, and presented him the following articles to sign,

I. That we should demolish all our new fortifications.

II. Give no protection to his subjects.

III. Make good all that the government had suffered by the abuse of the dustucks. †

The first article alluded to some additional works car-

* An aromatic leaf, which they present to their visitors, in the same manner the Turks do coffee.

† Meaning the privilege given us by our phirmaund, to grant passes free of all government duty for all the company's trade.

rying on, on the apprehension of an approaching French war.

The second, was to deprive us of the power of protecting our merchants, in which we were privileged by the phirmaund or royal grant; and might also allude to the protection given to one of his subjects of Nowagis Mahumud Caun's party, who had lately taken refuge in Calcutta.

The third was rather an opening to extort a large sum of money from the company; for it is almost impossible but there must be some abuse in a privilege of that kind.

These Mr. Watts signed, and was then made to give up the factory to him, the gates of which he ordered to be sealed, and then marched on to Calcutta. These articles were no more heard of, and he seemed bent on our destruction: And that none might presume to divert him from his resolution, he exacted an oath from Jagut-seat, who had always acted as mediator between the government and the Europeans, not to interfere or offer any argument to make him alter his mind. After this, no one dared to plead for the unfortunate English; and the Soubah, surrounded by a thousand greedy minions and hungry officers, all eager for the plunder of so rich a place, heard nothing but the most servile applauses of his resolution. Thus the avenues to justice and mercy were shut up, and all our submissive offers ineffectual. I shall not dwell on all the circumstances of the siege, which was such as might naturally be expected from a garrison consisting almost entirely of citizens, with a few soldiers commanded by officers who had never seen an action, and a fort, that looked more like merchants warehouses than a place of defence. June 19, the enemy had made such progress, that a general retreat was determined on for the next day; but whether or not the governor

governor thought himself the more immediate object of the Soubah's fury, and therefore his danger greater than the rest, instead of waiting the appointed time, or giving proper orders to the garrison, he went out at the River gate, and got on board the first ship he could come to. All who chanced to be near, and saw the governor going off, concluded the retreat was general, and rushed out with him. They seized the boats that were at the water side, and pushed as fast as they could for the ships, where once on board, they stood down the river. Those who remained in the garrison made a virtue of necessity, and still endeavoured to defend themselves; but from this time all was despair, bravery and confusion; and the next evening, their ammunition being almost expended, and farther defence or a retreat impracticable, they hung out a flag of truce, which the enemy taking for a surrender, they immediately scaled the walls, killing only such as made opposition. On the Soubah's entering the fort himself, he ordered the English into confinement. Unhappily for them, they were standing all together near the Black-hole prison, which appearing to the enemy a secure place, they were forced into it, maugre all their efforts to avoid it. I shall not pretend to paint all the horrors of that dreadful night, which has been already so pathetically described by one of the sufferers *; but only observe, that most of the young gentlemen in the company's service, and many of the principal inhabitants, expired in the most dreadful torments, twenty-three only remaining alive out of one hundred forty-six. The Soubah gave up the town to be plundered, reserving to himself only the effects in the fort; and thus sacrificed to his capricious folly or ambition an innocent people, whose trade was the chief source of his riches.

* Mr. Holwell.

The other European settlements were threatened with the same fate; but whether they were more politic in their conduct, or that the Soubah was satisfied with the blood he had already spilt, he contented himself with exacting two lacks of rupees from the French, and four from the Dutch, and then marched back to his capital, where he was received with the utmost terror and astonishment, which he endeavoured to extend as much as possible, by writing to the court of Dehli, and to his provincial governors, that he had destroyed an army of ten thousand Infidels, and taken four hundred pieces of brass cannon, and an immense quantity of warlike stores.

Early in October, he marched against his relation, the young Nabob of Purhunea, who was much such a giddy abandoned youth as himself, superior to him in nothing but a braver spirit. When the two armies drew near each other, the young Nabob was falsely informed, that Surajah Dowla was advanced on an eminence to reconnoitre. Animated at the approach of his rival, and hoping at once to put an end to the war, he hastened to meet him, at the head of a few troops that chanced to be advanced beyond the rest of his army; but, instead of Surajah Dowla, it proved to be Meer Jaffier and Dus Mahumud Caun, who were very advantageously posted. Still ignorant of his mistake, he rushed forward with great bravery, crying out, "It is the Soubah I seek." Meer Jaffier, desirous to save his life, went so far as to call out to him, that the Soubah was not there; but when he still prest on, unwilling, by giving way, to expose himself to the Soubah's resentment, he was necessitated, in self-defence, to make a vigorous resistance, and in the conflict the Purhunean received his death from a musket-ball. By this victory, Surajah Dowla arrived at the greatest height of power a Soubah of Bengal could attain to. He was
in

in the prime of his youth; confirmed from Dehli; the provinces subdued; no rival left; a vast army in his pay; and a full treasury. Flushed with this grandeur, he governed with all the insolence of unbridled power, dreaded by all, and beloved by none. In the mean time, the wretched remains of our unfortunate colony lay on board a few defenceless ships at Fulta, the most unwholesome spot in the country, about twenty miles below Calcutta, and destitute of all the common necessities of life: But by the assistance of the French and Dutch, to whose humanity they were much indebted on this occasion, and partly by the assistance of the natives, who both from interest and attachment privately supplied them with all kinds of provisions, they supported the horror of their situation till August, when they received a reinforcement of two hundred and forty men from Fort St. George, under the command of major Kilpatrick, with money and warlike stores. But their greatest misery was yet to come; for now the sickly season came on; and what with bad air, bad weather, confinement on board of ships, and want of proper refreshments, such a mortality ensued, as swept off almost all the military, and many of the inhabitants. They continued in this situation till the arrival of admiral Watson, in the month of December, with the king's squadron, consisting of the Kent, Salisbury, and Tyger, with two frigates and two Indiamen, having on board six hundred Europeans and a thousand seapoys, under the command of lieutenant-colonel Robert Clive; followed by the Cumberland, and another Indiaman, with one hundred Europeans and four hundred seapoys, but which were not yet arrived; a force that could give little hopes of success, but from the great qualities of the gentlemen that commanded it. Admiral Watson, was an officer of great bravery, disinterestedness, and public spirit,

spirit. Colonel Clive was a gentleman, who had already eminently distinguished himself in the war on the coast of Coromandel; where, by a long train of glorious successes against the constant superior numbers of the French, he had restored the English affairs at a time when they were thought desperate: he had lately commanded the land forces on the successful expedition against Angria; and was now pitched on as the properest person to restore their affairs in Bengal.

It may appear matter of wonder, why the Soubah permitted us to continue so quietly at Fulta, till we were become formidable to him, which I can only account for from his mean opinion of us, as he had been frequently heard to say, he did not imagine there was ten thousand men in all Frenghistan, meaning Europe, and had no idea of our attempting to return by force, but supposed that we staid at Fulta, only till the season would permit our going out of the river. And, indeed, it is possible, that now his anger was subsided, he might see the folly he had committed; and might wish our return on his own terms, which were, to live under his government, without laws or fortifications of our own, and to carry on our trade like the Armenians and his own subjects. Whatever the motive was, it was happy for us, and gave us time to prepare every thing to assist the squadron in going up the river; and accordingly December 27, 1756, the troops were embarked, and the fleet stood up, and on the twenty-ninth they were re-landed for the attack of Budje Boodjee, a place of such strength, that had they understood the art of defence, might have cost us much trouble. After a most fatiguing march, from five in the evening, till seven next morning, we came in sight of the place, while at the same time the fleet was got a-breast and began to fire. Colonel Clive ordered the grenadiers, volunteers and all the seapoys, to go as
near

near as they could under cover, and be ready for an assault as soon as a breach should be made, whilst the rest of the army halted in a hollow on the plain, in order to intercept the garrison, if they attempted to retreat. While we were in this situation, and ignorant of any other enemy than those in the place, we were alarmed at the sight of some horse in our rear; and before we had time to get out of this unlucky situation, we found ourselves almost surrounded by the enemy, who had got possession of the eminences, and began to fire on us. Such a sudden surprise might have endangered our little army, had not the colonel acted with great presence of mind. He immediately detached platoons wherever the enemy appeared most formidable; but they, presumptuous from their triumph over us at Calcutta, stood with great boldness, and killed and wounded eight men of the first platoon that advanced; but now we brought a field-piece to bear upon them, which kept them at a greater distance; and the detachment that had been made for the assault of the fort, being returned on hearing the firing, and having joined us, we marched into the open plain, and discovered our enemy to be Monichhund, the Soubah's governor of Calcutta, who was come to throw himself into the place, at the head of three thousand horse and foot, but being stunned with the firing of the king's ships, he thought his assistance would be fruitless, and was returning, when he came unexpectedly upon us, and attacked us with much greater bravery than we ever experienced in any engagement we have had with them. In this skirmish we had twenty-one Europeans killed and wounded, and several seapoys. Monichhund received a shot through his turband, lost his second in command, and about fifty of his men; and was so intimidated, by the reception he met with, that without making any stay at Calcutta, he

he hastened away to his master, to assure him, that these were not the same kind of Englishmen he had before met with. The ships soon silenced the fort; and as our little army was not sufficient to surround the place, the garrison retreated, unknown to us; and as the troops had been very much fatigued, the Colonel proposed to defer the assault till day-break; but some seamen advancing just at the close of the evening very near, and receiving no fire, they gave a huzza, when suddenly the whole army, without waiting for orders or officers, rushed forward over the bridge which the enemy had neglected to break down, and entered at the breach made by the ships; and in this confusion Captain Dougal Campbell, pressing forward to restrain the men, was by mistake killed by our own people, to the great concern of the whole army, as he was a brave and capable officer, and a worthy generous man.

January 2, 1757, the troops reembarked, and Jan. 3, at day-break, were again landed in sight of Calcutta, which the enemy abandoned almost as soon as our ships came a-breast of it, firing only the guns that were ready loaded, which did some execution on the Tyger, and then Mr. Watson landed the King's troops, and took possession of the fort. The inhabitants, in the joy of returning to their settlements, seemed to forget they were returned to empty houses, and universal bankruptcy.

The conduct of political affairs was now vested in a select Committee and the Colonel; the Admiral being pleased to declare, they were the best judges of the Company's interest, and that he was ready to execute whatever they thought most conducive to it. The Committee left the correspondence with the Soubah to the Colonel, whom we are henceforward to consider as chief negotiator of all affairs with the government,

It

It will be proper now to take a view of the present state of our affairs. The last advices from Europe were such as indicated the greatest probability of an approaching war with France. The French had a considerable settlement, called Chandernagore, about thirty miles above us, with a garrison of more than five hundred Europeans. We well knew, should they join the Soubah, it would give him an almost invincible superiority over us. From the fear of the government, and the mutual interest of both parties, there had hitherto tacitly subsisted a kind of neutrality within the Ganges, though without any treaty to make it obligatory. It was the undoubted interest of the French, to force us to confirm this neutrality, or join the Soubah. Sensible of this, they sent a deputation, which arrived a few days after the recovery of Calcutta, with instructions to court us to this neutrality, or threaten their junction with the Soubah. It was our interest to amuse the deputies, till we could judge what turn our affairs were likely to take with the Soubah. For this purpose, some time was passed in previous ceremonies; and, on our parts, great willingness shown to accede to the neutrality, conditionally that they should unite with us against the Soubah; but some doubts being started, whether, being subordinate to Pondicherry, they had power to bind their superiors, they returned to consult their principals. In the mean time, an expedition was sent against Houghly, under the conduct of Major Kilpatrick, with the King's troops, volunteers, grenadiers, and two companies of Seapoys, supported by the Bridgwater, and mann'd boats of the Squadron. The enemy were very numerous, having six thousand men in the fort and in an adjacent camp. They stood the assault, which was very bloody to them, with little loss on our side. The fort and city were plundered, and as many of the magnificent houses destroyed, as the short
time

time would permit; for now the Soubah was approaching, with different sentiments than he before entertained of us.

The account given of us by the Houghly fugitives and Monichhund, had made such an impression on him, that he would gladly have consented to our return on our former footing; but it hurt his pride, to think of having satisfaction forced from him by merchants: However, he continued his march, determined to fight, or negotiate, as opportunity gave him advantage. The probability of a war with France, which would require our whole force on the coast of Coromandel, the uncertainty of an action, especially if the French should join him, but, above all, a great part of our force not being yet arrived, inclined us to wish for honourable peace. At all events, every day gained was an advantage; we were destitute of draught and carriage oxen, and many other things absolutely necessary, before we could take the field. A camp was formed on a plain about two miles to the northward of Calcutta, which was made as strong as the situation and time would permit; and the Soubah advancing, the troops sent to Houghly rejoined us; and our whole force now amounted to four hundred battalion, one hundred and twenty train, and one thousand four hundred Seapoys; for the Cumberland was not yet arrived.

Colonel Clive, on his first arrival, had wrote the Soubah, "That Admiral Watson, commander of the
" King's invincible ships, and himself, a soldier, whose
" conquests in Decan might have reached his ears,
" were come to revenge the injuries he had done the
" English company; that it would better become him
" to shew his love of justice, by making them ample
" satisfaction for all their losses, than expose his coun-
" try

“ try to be the seat of war.” Such a haughty stile astonished him; he would not deign to answer it, but permitted Jagutseat, and others of the great men, who had letters addressed to them to the same purpose, to answer them, and directed them to sound our dispositions and expectations; and Jagutseat’s agent in camp wrote, by his orders, to desire the Colonel would send a person, in whom he could confide, to treat with him; whose coming he should wait at a place called Nabob Gunge, twenty miles from our camp; but the very same day his van appeared, passing our army, as if on their way to Calcutta. This had so much the appearance of an intended insult or deceit, that the Colonel marched out, at the head of four hundred Europeans, and one thousand Seapoys, with two field pieces; and toward the close of the evening, a cannonading ensued, but the enemy was so advantageously posted, that the effect was trifling on either side, and night approaching, the Colonel returned to camp. The Soubah, pretending to be ignorant of what had passed, sent a messenger to conduct to him whoever the colonel should think fit to send, who sent Messieurs Walsb and Scrafton to him: In the mean time, under cover of this negociation, the Soubah himself, with his whole army, passed in sight of us, and encamped between our army and the town; which he ridiculously thought a master-piece of policy, on a false notion, that Calcutta, thus deprived of relief, must fall into his hands, and our army would be then at his mercy. The two gentlemen were much surprized to find, that the Soubah, instead of waiting at the place appointed, was already with his army in the suburbs of Calcutta. Febr. 4, 1757, at seven in the evening, the Soubah gave them audience in Omichund’s garden, where he affected to appear

appear in great state, attended by the best looking men amongst his officers, hoping to intimidate them by so warlike an assembly. After the first compliments, they were desired to retire, and acquaint his ministers with their proposals. Prior to any accommodation, they insisted on the Soubah's returning to the place from which he first offered to treat; but finding the minister shuffled with them, they desired a private conference with the Soubah: But his Excellency *, judging from his own treacherous disposition, was so firmly persuaded that they had private arms about them and wanted to assassinate him, that he could by no means be brought to trust himself alone with them; so that, finding the Soubah only intended to amuse them, they pretended to be satisfied, and desired to depart. The Soubah dismissed them, telling them he expected their return in the morning, with full powers to finish every thing; and desired, before they quitted the camp, they would go to the tent of Jagutseat's agent, who had something to communicate to them that would be very agreeable to the Colonel.

The Soubah had given orders to detain them there, and proposed to assault the fort the next day; but suspecting his design, they put out their lights, pushed forward, and soon gained the camp. On reporting their embassy to the Colonel, he determined to attack the enemy at day-break; a resolution that may appear rash to many, for the Soubah's army consisted of at least † eighteen thousand horse, and sixty

* The term nearest the title usually given the Soubah.

† As the numbers differ so widely from an account lately published, I think it necessary to say, I have my authority from the present Soubah, who told me Surajah Dowla had in his pay twenty thousand horse, and eighty thousand foot; and as the Soubah was not then engaged in any other war, it is reasonable to suppose the greatest part of them were present: and their appearance confirmed this conjecture.

thousand

thousand foot with forty pieces of heavy cannon: but the Colonel considered only the necessity of the attempt and not the danger, for all our black camp-followers had disappeared at the approach of the Soubah's army, and we must very soon have been distressed for provisions. To our force, which I have already mentioned, was added six hundred sailors from the squadron; and the plan of operations was, to nail up the cannon, and push at the head quarters. Febr. 5, we marched at about three in the morning, and our project so far succeeded, that we came upon them unexpectedly; but, when the day appeared, there came on so thick a fog, that it was impossible to discover any object at ten yards distance; and this was the Soubah's preservation; for the fog clearing up for a few minutes, between seven and eight, we found ourselves at a great distance from the head quarters, and exposed to the enemy's artillery, which did great execution amongst us. The country too was full of holes and ditches, which the enemy had lined with musquetry, which did us some mischief; but from this immense army we had no regular attack, except from a large body of Persian horse, who received a general volley from the whole battalion, which obliged them to face about with the loss of near half their number. Thus finding himself disappointed in his principal object, the Colonel ordered the march towards Calcutta.

The enemy now pressed on our rear, and took two of our field pieces, one of which had the carriage broke by the badness of the roads, and we had some men picked off from behind cover. At eleven o'clock we reached the fort, and found our whole loss of killed and wounded was about a hundred and twenty soldiers and sailors, and a hundred seapoys, a considerable diminution

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of

of our small force! But the enemy suffered much more, having lost six or seven hundred men, killed and wounded, with two general officers, besides a vast number of oxen, camels, horses and elephants: That there might be no doubt of our victory, our army marched out again in the evening to their former camp, the route being within a mile of the Soubah's head quarters, though covered with a wood; but the morning's alarm had struck such terror into them, that, far from attacking us, they were ready for confused flight, with which we could not at that time be acquainted. The greatest advantage we reaped from this action, was in the effect it had upon the Soubah, who was not only intimidated by the boldness of the attempt, but struck with his own imprudence, in having exposed himself to be attacked at such a disadvantage. To add to his uneasiness, he thought he discovered some appearance of disaffection in some of his principal officers, particularly in Meer Jaffier, whose conduct in this affair had been very mysterious. The Soubah's army passed that night under arms, in continual apprehension of being attacked; and early in the morning he sent a messenger to enquire the cause of our behaviour, and to renew the treaty; and, under cover of this negotiation, he thought himself very happy in quitting the neighbourhood of Calcutta, and encamping on a plain within sight of our army. Had he continued there but one day longer, the Colonel intended to have had a battery on Dum Dumma bridge, which would have commanded to the Lake, and put his army intirely at our mercy. But now, only sensible of our own loss, and ignorant of the effect it had on the enemy, we gladly renewed the treaty, which in two days was signed by both parties, and of which the following are the articles.

First

First was a paper signifying, that from this time hostilities should cease between his Excellency the Soubah of Bengal, Bahar and Orissa, and the English company; and that there should be perpetual friendship between them; which was signed by the Admiral, Colonel, Governor, and council, on behalf of the company, and one in the same terms, delivered by the Soubah.

*Articles signed and sealed by his Excellency Surajah Dowla,
Soubah of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa,
dated February 9, 1757.*

I. Whatever rights and privileges the king has granted the English company in their Phirmaunds,* and Husbulhookums,† shall be acknowledged, and stand good; whatever villages have been given to the company by the Phirmaunds, notwithstanding they have been with-held by former Soubahs, shall be given up to them; nor shall the Zemindars oppose their taking possession of those villages. *Agreed to.*

II. All goods passing and repassing through the country, by land or by water, with English dufftucks, shall be exempted from any tax, fee, or imposition, of the Gantwattas, Choqueedars, Zemindars,‡ or others. *Agreed to.*

III. All the company's factories seized by the Soubah, shall be returned; all the money, goods, and effects belonging to the company, their servants and tenants, which have been seized and taken by the Soubah, shall be restored; and what has been plundered by his people, made good by the payment of such a sum of money, as his justice shall think reasonable. *I will restore only what has been accounted for in the government books.*

* Patents or papers signed by the Mogul.

† Patents or papers signed by the Vizier.

‡ Officers belonging to the Customs.

IV. The Company shall be allowed to fortify Calcutta, in such manner as they shall think proper, without hindrance or obstruction. *Agreed to.*

V. And to coin ficcas,* both of gold and silver, of equal fineness with those of Muxadavad, which shall pass current through the provinces. *Agreed to.*

Then followed the Soubah's seal; and having sworn to fulfil the same, Meer Jaffier, and Roydullub, two of his general officers, undersigned it as securities.

The Soubah then sent the usual present to the Governor, Admiral, and Colonel, consisting each of an elephant dress, and head jewel, which were received by the Governor and Colonel, as representatives of the company. Mr. Watson, as representative of the King, refused to accept the present; but received the Soubah's officers who brought it in a very polite manner on board the Kent, and displayed to them his lower tyre of thirty-two pounders, of which they made a dreadful report to their master, who not conceiving any great liking to his new friends, marched with all haste to the capital, happily for his subjects, somewhat humbled by his late defeat. Mr. Watts being well versed in the country language, and in their politics and customs, accompanied the Soubah to attend the fulfilling of the treaty.

I left the French deputies on their return to Chandernagore, to consult their principals on the extent of their powers. The attack of Houghly, and the hasty march of the Soubah, had impeded the negotiation, which they now resumed, having first been tampering with the Soubah about a junction with him, which would certainly have taken place, had we not pushed our affairs with such vigour. In this in-

* Current coin.

terval arrived the certain news of a declaration of war against France ; notwithstanding which it was long debated, whether it were not most for the company's interest to accept the neutrality ? and so far carried in the affirmative, that the majority were for it ; the articles drawn up ; and nothing wanting, but Mr. Watfon's approbation, which seemed so little doubted of, that part of the troops were already ordered to embark for Madrafs, and the French deputies were fully persuaded it was agreed to, and waited only the formality of execution : but while things were in this state, Admiral Pocock arrived in the Cumberland, with the rest of the troops, and an unexpected reinforcement of three hundred men from Bombay. Admiral Watfon, apprehensive he might be reflected on, should he neglect such an opportunity of distressing the common enemy, hesitated signing ; and a prospect of further troubles in the country determined him to delay it for the present. The Afghuans, mountaineers who possess Candahar and the mountains that divide Persia from Hindostan, encouraged by the success of Nadir Shah, entered the country with so powerful an army, commanded by an old officer of the Shah's, named Abdalla Caun, that the court of Dehli, unable to resist, submitted to the conqueror ; and news now came, that he intended to visit the eastern provinces. This news alarmed the Soubah, who acquainted the colonel with it, and dropped some hints of wanting his assistance. The Colonel on the first advices, crossed the Ganges, which was equally convenient, either to march to Chandernagore, or to the Soubah. This new accident, together with the advices received from Mr. Watts, decided the fate of the French settlement, by determining the result of the neutrality. Mr. Watts found, that the French had, by the prevailing power

of corruption, won over to their interest several courtiers, who were most in the Soubah's confidence; and had certain information, that the Soubah had wrote for Monf. Busley, who commanded a large army in the Decan; that we might be assured he would never fulfill the treaty, but would infallibly join the French, and fall on us, whenever our squadron and forces left the river; that the only way to prevent it, was, to attack the French, while he was influenced by his fears of the Afghuans. Mr. Watts's judgment will hereafter appear to be well founded, as the Soubah had already sent a large body of troops to assist the French; had returned the two lacks of rupees taken from them the year before; and had entered into some private negotiation with the French governor, wherein he promised him the government of Houghly, a mint, and other advantages. His espousing their cause so warmly, made us still cautious of provoking him too far; but Mr. Watts made so artful a use of his fears of the Afghuans, observing to him that we could never think of leaving our settlement to be attacked by the French in case he required our assistance against them, that, partly by such arguments, and, taught by the French the power of money at the Soubah's court, partly by a handsome present of money to his first secretary, he produced the following letter from him to Mr. Watson.

“ Your agreeable letter, acknowledging the receipt
“ of mine, which you tell me has dispelled your
“ anxiety; that you had hitherto forbore attacking the
“ French, out of regard to me; that you had prepared reasonable articles; had sent for them, and
“ told them to sign them; that they gave for answer, if any future commander should disapprove
“ them, they had not power to overrule him; that
“ therefore peace had not taken place, with other
“ dis-

“disagreeable circumstances; I have received, and I
“have well considered it. If it be true, that one
“Frenchman does not approve, and abide by a treaty
“entered into by another, no confidence is to be
“placed in them. The reason of my forbidding war
“in my country is, I look on the French as
“my own subjects, because they have, in this affair,
“implored my protection; for which reason I wrote
“to you to make peace with them, or else I had
“neither pleaded for them, nor protected them: But
“you are a generous and wise man, and well know
“if an enemy comes to you with a clear heart, to
“implore your mercy, his life should be granted him;
“that is, if you think him pure of heart; but if you
“mistrust his sincerity, ACT ACCORDING TO THE
“TIME AND OCCASION.”

This letter may be very well understood, as a consent to our attacking the French, though it certainly was never meant as such; for he had not only his colours flying, and a body of men at Chandernagore, but had ten thousand men marching towards us, under the command of Roydullub, who were advanced as far as Placis, near thirty miles from the capital; another of four or five thousand still nearer, under the command of Monichchund; But another well applied bribe to Nimcomar, the Governor of Houghly, removed all obstacles; for it persuaded him to withdraw the troops under his command from Chandernagore, and to write the Soubah, “That as the French were by no means
“able to resist the English, he had therefore ordered
“his troops to Houghly, lest his victorious colours
“should be involved in their disgrace.” This the Soubah approved of; and wrote to Roydullub and Monichchund to proceed no farther. Thus, floating between his fears and wishes, he shamefully abandoned

those whom he was bound, both for his honour and interest, to support; and now no farther obstacle remaining, Colonel Clive, who was advanced almost to the limits of Chandernagore, as if on his way to join the Soubah, immediately began the siege.

The fort was a regular square, mounting twelve twenty-four pounders on each bastion, with several cannon mounted en barbette; a fine ravelin before the gate to the river side; the ditch imperfect; no glacis; and but a small esplanade of about two hundred and fifty yards: and had of soldiers, sailors, and other Europeans, near six hundred men in garrison, besides three hundred good seapoys. It was invested on the thirteenth of March. The fourteenth the French abandoned their outworks; and from that time to the twenty-second were mostly employed in erecting two batteries, which were then ready. On the twenty-third Mr. Watfon, joined by Mr. Pocock, (who on his ships arrival at Balasore, hearing what was going forward, to partake of the glory of the action, came up in a light boat, and hoisted his flag on board the Tyger) passed the ships the French had sunk, owing to their neglect in sinking them so wide as to leave a passage between them, and at seven in the morning the ships came a-breast of the fort, and the land-batteries were opened. For two hours it was as bloody an engagement as any during the whole war. The Kent lay exposed to a terrible fire from the flank of the inland bastion, by the tide failing, and preventing her coming to her proper station. In this attack, Captain Speke, the Admiral's Captain, whose wise counsels and enterprising spirit contributed much to the great success of this little squadron in India, had part of his leg carried away by the same ball that unfortunately killed his son. Mr. Perrault, first Lieutenant, and several other officers, were killed. The Tyger also suffered very
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considerably in men and officers, and Mr. Pocock himself received a slight wound. But the French, having several guns dismounted; their parapet almost demolished by the fire of the ships; their whole curtain enfiladed by the fire of our musquetry from the tops of the houses of the town; and a breach nearly made; capitulated, and had favourable terms granted them. The army suffered but very little, but the squadron had above a hundred and forty killed and wounded. The goods found in the warehouse were sold for the benefit of the army and navy, and produced about ten lacks of rupees. The squadron returned to Calcutta, but the army encamped at the back of Chandernagore. Surajah Dowla was in great agitation of mind during the siege, sometimes threatening Mr. Watts, and sometimes caressing him, conformable to the news of the day; but, when the fatal news of the surrender of the place was communicated to him by a letter from the Colonel, wherein he ascribed his successes to the favour of heaven and his Excellency's auspices, under which his arms had been so fortunate; he affected to conceal his chagrin in outward demonstrations of joy, and wrote the Colonel the most pompous congratulations upon the occasion. To complete his confusion, he now received the news of the Afghuans return to their own country, having carried away almost as great a treasure as Shah Nadir; and also of Monsr. Bufley's being obliged to return to quiet some troubles that had broke out in the Decan: So that looking on us as his only enemies, and sensible of his folly in abandoning the French to us, he determined to protect the small remainder of them, which was about a hundred men, collected together at Cassimbuzar, under the command of Monsr. Laws, and to dissemble his resentment, till the return of our squadron and forces to the coast gave him an opportunity to fall on us again,
and

and extirpate us for ever. But as the whole tenor of his conduct strongly indicated, that he had views of farther service from this body of French, Mr. Watson wrote him, "that if he continued to protect the king's enemies, " he would light up a flame in his country, that all the " waters of the Ganges should not quench." Thus intimidated, he obliged the French to quit the province, and to retire to Patna, where he kept them in reserve against the long wished for moment, when the return of our forces to the coast should leave us exposed to his revenge. From the time he heard that Chander-nagore was taken, he never enjoyed a moment's peace of mind. His imagination was ever haunted by dreadful notions of the king's ships, which he was told, and was idle enough to believe, could be brought up the Ganges, close to his capital; and, to prevent it, he dammed up the mouth of the Cassimbuzar river. To encrease his apprehensions, our army still continued in camp near Houghly. These circumstances, together with the mortification of refunding the plunder of Calcutta, and the repeated demands of the French, would sometimes make his anger burst out from under the veil of dissimulation with which he endeavoured to cover it. In one of those transports, he determined to break with us, and ordered Meer Jaffier, with a large body of troops, to join those at Placis, promising him a reward of ten lacks of rupees the day he returned victorious; and sent for Mr. Laws to come down immediately from Patna, for that he was determined to fall on us, and turned our vacqueel * out of the durbar. But these fits of valour were of short duration; his fears again prevailed; the march of the troops was countermanded; the vacqueel honoured with a dress; Mr. Watts caressed; and his

* The company's representative at the Nabob's durbar or court.

revenge smothered, till it might blaze forth with more security. But he had now given such strong indications of his resolution never to forgive us, that Colonel Clive, necessitated by these repeated proofs of the Soubah's perfidious intentions, recommended to Mr. Watts the forming of a party to join us, in case things should come to extremes, which many circumstances concurred to facilitate. The Soubah, by the severity and capriciousness of his temper, had made himself many secret enemies, both in his court and army. The old ministers of his predecessors were obliged to give way to new favourites, chosen from the dregs of the people; and there was hardly one of them but had, in his fits of passion, been threatened with death; while mutual mistrust prevented their taking any measures for their preservation. At last one of them, named Coda Yar Caun Laitte, thinking there was more confidence to be placed in us than in his own countrymen, sent a message to Mr. Watts, that he had something of great importance to communicate to him, and wished to see him. Mr. Watts was too closely watched by the Soubah's spies, to venture himself, but sent one Omichund to him, who was an agent under him. To him he opened his mind freely, acquainting him with his own danger; assured him the Soubah was firmly bent on extirpating us; and made a tender of his services: Omichund confirmed him in his fears of the Soubah, and gave him hopes his proposals would be accepted. A few days after, Mr. Watts was agreeably surprised to receive proposals of the like nature from Meer Jaffier, a general of the first rank, and nearly related to the Soubah, by his marriage with Allyvherde Caun's sister. I have before mentioned, that this gentleman's mysterious conduct in the last battle, where he kept him-

self

self at a distance, waiting to see what issue the affair was likely to have, had made the Soubah suspicious of him, as well as of Roydullub, for his close connection with him. The uneven temper of the Soubah could never long retain its disguise; for though he affected an exaggerated friendship for those he intended to destroy, yet his real sentiments would now and then escape him; and he had been frequently heard to say, he would have the heads of them both. This had been told them, and sufficiently warned them to provide for their safety; so that Meer Jaffier and Roydullub both judged the English protection would be a port of safety to them. They sent a man privately to Mr. Watts, to let him know how they stood affected, and to assure him, that Surajah Dowla was determined never to forgive the English the disgrace of his late defeat, and waited only a proper opportunity to fall on them again; and concluded with a hint that many of the principal officers of the army, whose lives were in continual jeopardy, from the cruel and capricious temper of the Soubah, had determined to depose him; that if the English would support Meer Jaffier in his views on the Soubahship, he would readily make any concessions that might be deemed necessary to indemnify the English for the losses they had sustained, and to render their trade advantageous to them. These proposals were received with great satisfaction; and Mr. Watts acquainted the Colonel and the gentlemen below with it, who immediately empowered him to treat, and settle the plan of operations with Meer Jaffier. Mr. Watts had an interview with Meer Jaffier, who represented to him, that nothing could be done while the Nabob's army was in the field, as it separated him from the heads of his party, and hindered him from concerting proper
measures

measures with him. It was agreed therefore, to lull the Soubah into a firm persuasion of our peaceable intentions, and to try, by dissimulation, to remove this obstacle. For this purpose, the Colonel ordered the army into quarters, and wrote the Soubah, "That while the armies continued in the field, their enemies would be endeavouring to interrupt that perfect harmony and friendship which subsisted between them; that he had therefore put his army into quarters; and, though he had no reason to doubt his Excellency's strict adherence to, and full compliance with, all the articles of the treaty, yet, nevertheless, he wished he would disappoint those hopes their mutual enemies entertained, by withdrawing his army from Placis, and that he would hasten the payment of the money, and other articles of the treaty." The Soubah was glad to be freed from the uneasiness our army gave him by being in the field, thanked the Colonel for this proof of his friendship, and promised to put his troops into quarters: But these words were too inconsonant to his schemes, to be followed by actions; for he still continued his army encamped, and prolonged to the utmost the execution of the treaty. By the happy use of an unexpected event, this obstacle was removed, and the Soubah became the dupe of his own projects.

The Mharattas, hearing of the troubles in Bengal, and thinking it a proper opportunity to annex so rich a province to their, already too, extensive empire, wrote to the governor of Calcutta, the following letter:

Balla-

*Ballajeerow Seehoo Bajeroy, vizir to Ram Rajah, brother
to Rajah Seehoo, from Hydrabad, to Roger Drake
governor of Calcutta.*

“ I have a long time wished for a meeting with you,
“ which the great distance has prevented; every thing
“ prospers with me; and it is my wish that success
“ attend you, with long life and happiness: Your
“ misfortunes have been related to me by Ragooje,
“ son to Janoogée. Make yourself easy, and be my
“ friend. Send me your proposals, such as you imagine
“ may be for the best; and, with the Divine assistance,
“ Sumseer Caun Bhadre, and Ragoo Baboo,
“ son to Bajorey, shall enter Bengal with a hundred
“ and twenty thousand horse; besides, there are other
“ forces shall be ready at your call, if you have need
“ of them, having wrote to Meu Caun to proceed to
“ you, whenever you shall write to him to that
“ effect. Whatever goods and riches you have lost
“ in Bengal, the double of its value shall be restored
“ by me. Do not, on any account, make peace
“ with the Nabob. In a few days my forces shall
“ enter Bengal, and the trade of that province shall
“ be entirely yours. Govinroy will relate to you
“ farther particulars: To him communicate what force
“ you have need of, and due regard shall be paid to
“ your directions. The French shall not remain in
“ Bengal: Your forces shall keep them out by sea,
“ mine by land.” The person mentioned in the letter
had a private conference with Colonel Clive, wherein
he confirmed the contents. The Colonel’s first reflection
was, that this might possibly be an invention of
the Soubah to sound his intentions; when suddenly,
with that quickness of thought by which he is so
distinguished on all emergencies, he determined to turn
the stratagem on the head of the inventor, by sending
the

the letter to the Soubah himself; which, if his suspicions were just, would deceive the Soubah into a firm persuasion, that we had no jealousy of his designs; or, if the letter was real, would awe him by the fear of so powerful an alliance. Mr. Scrafton was accordingly dispatched with these proposals, accompanied by a letter from the Colonel; in which he wrote him, "That notwithstanding he had put the army into quarters, and given every proof his Excellency could require of his firm intentions to observe the peace, he was not yet so happy as to gain his Excellency's confidence, who still kept a large army encamped at Placis, which seemed to hang like an impending storm over our heads; kept the provinces alarmed; and prevented the merchants from resorting to Calcutta: That he had but one proof more to give him of his sincerity, which the bearer would acquaint him with. If that would not suffice, he should think himself for ever banished from his confidence and friendship."

The Soubah, who had been informed by his spies of the interview between the Colonel and the Mharatta agent, and of his letter being on the way, was impatient to know the contents. Mr. Watts introduced Mr. Scrafton to the Soubah, and they found him accompanied by Naranfing, the head spy, Monichchund, and Jagutseat. The Soubah affected to be charmed with the Colonel's letter, which was enforced by every argument suitable to the occasion; he expressed some doubts of the Colonel's sincerity, but found himself obliged to put on the appearance of conviction, when the Mharatta's letter was delivered to him; Having read it, he broke forth into loud acclamations to the Colonel's praise; and, thinking now to deceive us by this feigned confidence, said, he would order his
army

LETTER III

army into quarters; and did not doubt but our fleet and army would quit the country as soon as the season would permit; and desired we would go to Rajah Mohemloll, his prime minister, to whom he had given orders to finish our affairs; and immediately ordered the troops into the city.

The minister acted the same part as his master; but, like an old practitioner in ministerial arts, proposed, that the Colonel should send up a discharge in full of all sums stipulated by the treaty, though nothing was yet determined with respect to the thirty-eight villages,* and very little progress made in the rest of the treaty, and that by the time it arrived, the whole should be discharged. The Soubah returned the Colonel a favourable answer, and told the gentleman who carried the letter, that he expected him back in a week with the desired discharge, and then he would reward him with great presents and honours.

Every thing was now in a fair way; the Placis army broken up and put into quarters; and Meer Jaffier, after having consulted with Roydullub and the heads of his party, concluded the following treaty with Mr. Watts, and promised to join us as soon as the armies drew near each other: We, on our parts, promised, by the blessing of God on our arms, to make him Soubah of the three provinces.

Treaty executed by Meer Mahumud Jaffier Caun Bahader.

I swear by God and the Prophet of God, to abide by the terms of this treaty whilst I have life.†

Treaty made with Admiral Watson, Colonel Clive, and the other Counsellors Mr. Drake and Mr. Watts.

* See the first article of the treaty, page 67.

† These words were written in his own hand, at the beginning of the Treaty, and were undersigned by him.

Art. I. Whatever articles were agreed upon in the time of peace with the Nabob Surajah Dowla, I agree to comply with.

II. The enemies of the English are my enemies, whether they be Indians or Europeans.

III. All the effects and factories belonging to the French in the province of Bengal, the paradise of nations, and Bahar, and Orissa, shall remain in the possession of the English, nor will I ever allow them any more to settle in the three provinces.

III. In consideration of the losses which the English Company have sustained by the capture and plunder of Calcutta by the Nabob, and the charges occasioned by the maintenance of the forces, I will give them one Crore of rupees.

V. For the effects plundered from the English inhabitants at Calcutta, I agree to give fifty lacks of rupees.

VI. For the effects plundered from the Gentoos, Moors, and other inhabitants of Calcutta, twenty lacks of rupees shall be given.

VII. For the effects plundered from the Armenian inhabitants of Calcutta, I will give the sum of seven lacks of rupees.

The distribution of the sums allotted to the English, Gentoo, Moor, and other inhabitants of Calcutta, shall be left to Admiral Watson, Colonel Clive, Roger Drake, William Watts, James Kilpatrick, and Richard Beecher, Esquires, to be disposed of by them, to whom they think proper.

VIII. Within the ditch which furrounds the borders of Calcutta are tracts of land belonging to several Zemindars; besides these, I will grant to the English Company six hundred yards without the ditch.

VIII. All the land lying south of Calcutta, as far as Culpee, shall be under the Zemindary of the English Company; and all the officers of those parts shall be

under their jurisdiction. The revenues to be paid by the Company in the same manner with other Zemindars.

X. Whenever I demand the assistance of the English, I will be at the charge of the maintenance of their troops.

XI. I will not erect any new fortifications near the river Ganges, below Houghly.

XII. As soon as I am established in the three provinces, the aforefaid sums shall be faithfully paid.

Dated the fifteenth of the month Ramzan, in the fourth year of the present reign.*

There was a separate treaty stipulating the payment of fifty lacks to the army and navy.

Our affairs were now drawing to a crisis, when an event happened, that had like to have blasted all our hopes. Whether any thing of our connections with Meer Jaffier had reached the Soubah's ears, or whether he had before projected his destruction and thought this the properest opportunity while we seemed so quiet, is uncertain; but Meer Jaffier thought himself in such danger, that he would no longer venture to go to court, and on his disobedience of the Soubah's summons, his death was resolved upon. The artillery was pointed against his house, and the troops ordered to surround it. Meer Jaffier acquainted the Colonel with his situation, and wrote him, that nothing could extricate him from the danger he was in, but the news of his march. The die was cast, and on the thirteenth of June, the whole army marched forward, and the Colonel wrote the Soubah, the very day of his march, to the following purport.

“ That from his great reputation for justice, and faithful observance of his word, he had been induced to
 “ make peace with him, and to pass over the loss of many
 “ Crores of rupees sustained by the English in the capture of Calcutta, and to rest content with what-
 “ ever he in his justice and generosity should restore

* June 1757.

“ to

“ to them ; that his Excellency had not thought fit to
“ set any value on the friendship of the English, but
“ had in every thing discouraged as much as possible the
“ company’s business, by turning their vaqueel disgrace-
“ fully from his presence, refusing free passage to the
“ English through his country, intercepting their trade,
“ and searching their factory at Cassimbuzar for am-
“ munition and warlike stores, on pretence of their in-
“ tending an attempt on his life, in the time of pro-
“ found peace, threatening them with an instant rupture,
“ if they did not submit to the search ; that these were
“ but trifles, compared to his open and avowed protec-
“ tion of the King’s enemies, of which his letters to
“ Mons. Busley, wrote but a few days after his entering
“ into a solemn treaty with us, inviting him to his coun-
“ try, was a flagrant proof ; that his protection and
“ allowance of ten thousand rupees per month, to
“ Mons. Laws, and many other circumstances, were not
“ only so many deviations from the treaty, but evident-
“ ly shewed his Excellency’s intention to fall upon
“ the English, as soon as the absence of their troops
“ might expose them to it ; that the main article of
“ the treaty was infringed, in his proffering only a
“ fifth part of the sum paid into the treasury, for the
“ plunder of Calcutta, and yet demanding a discharge
“ for the whole. The Colonel complained bitterly of
“ so many insults put upon him, and reminded the Sou-
“ bah how different his own conduct was, when called
“ upon to assist him against the Pattans. He solemnly de-
“ clared, his intentions were to have fought for him
“ to the last drop of his blood ; but seeing his Excel-
“ lency had chosen his friends from among his enemies,
“ and had in every respect deviated from his engage-
“ ments, he had determined, with the approbation of
“ all who were charged with the company’s affairs, to
“ proceed immediately to Cassimbuzar, and submit their

“ disputes to the arbitration of Meer Jaffier, Roydullub,
“ Jagutseat, and others of his great men: That if
“ it should be found, that he, the Colonel, had deviated
“ from the treaty, he then swore to give up all further
“ claims; but, that, if it appeared his Excellency had
“ broke it, he should then demand satisfaction for all
“ the losses sustained by the English, and all the charges
“ of their army and navy; and concluded with
“ telling him, that the rains being so near, and it requiring
“ many days to receive an answer, he had found
“ it necessary to wait upon him immediately.”

There are some affairs alluded to, which I thought too trifling to mention in the course of this account.

Some hours before the Soubah had received the Colonel's letter, Mr. Watts, and the gentlemen of Cassimbuzar, had made their escape by a speedy flight, which left the Soubah no further doubt of our intentions. And here let me pause a little, to do justice to the eminent services the public received from Mr. Watts, in the course of this great affair; his admirable assiduity and penetration, in discovering the Soubah's treacherous negotiation with the French; the right judgment he had formed of the Soubah's intentions to extirpate us, whenever the absence of our forces gave him the opportunity; and his great firmness and constancy, in remaining in the Soubah's capital, even after our army had begun its march, redound greatly to his honour.

Affairs between the Soubah and Meer Jaffier were now at a crisis. Some of the few who were faithful to the Soubah, assured him it was at Meer Jaffier's instigation that we marched up, and advised him to fall on him immediately; but others of Meer Jaffier's party, who were in his confidence, persuaded him to make up the breach for the present, and defer his designs to some more favourable occasion. If the Soubah erred before in abandoning the French, he doubly

doubly erred now, in admitting a suspicious friend and one whose death he was still determined on, to continue in the charge of a great body of troops, which self-defence would have taught him to make use of for his own preservation. He was sensible of his weakness; but instead of having resolution to rise above it, and terminating his fears at once by the attack of Meer Jaffier, he endeavoured to deceive him by the thin disguise of grace and pardon confirmed by oaths. The Koran was introduced, the accustomed pledge of their falsehood, the Soubah swore he would never attempt his life, Meer Jaffier, that he would be his faithful soldier, and fight for him to the last drop of his blood. They parted with smiles on their countenances and treachery in their hearts, each happy in the thought of over-reaching the other; and now we were the grand object of their attention. The Soubah immediately took the field, with about twenty thousand horse, and fifty thousand foot, and fifty pieces of heavy cannon; whilst our army, consisting of a thousand Europeans, and two thousand seapoys, with six field pieces, and a small detachment of sailors from the squadron, were advanced partly by land, and partly by water, as far as the town of Cutiva. Three days were passed there in the most uneasy suspense, waiting for intelligence of the issue of the dispute between the Soubah, and our ally Meer Jaffier. In this doubtful interval, the majority of our officers were against crossing the river, and every thing bore the face of disappointment; but, on the twenty second of June the Colonel received a letter from Meer Jaffier, which determined him to hazard a battle, and he passed the river at five in the evening. The Soubah was now within twenty miles of us; but far from being puffed up with the superiority of his numbers, he betrayed his anxiety at the approaching moment, when his life and government were

to be exposed to the issue of a battle. Mistrust of his own army, and the dread of an enemy, who had before defeated him, made him presage the worst, and a trifling circumstance, which he took for an ill omen, confirmed him in his fears: It is indeed the effect alone which can excuse my mentioning it.

As he was sitting in his tent, the evening before the battle, revolving in his mind the doubtful issue, his attendants imperceptibly left him one by one till he was alone; when a fellow entered, unperceived by the Soubah, and carried off the gold top of the hookah he was smoking, and cut off some of the broad-cloth of his tent. It shocked his soul to think, that he, whose frowns were death but in the morning, should now be so little feared: He called for his attendants, and cried, with great emotion, "Sure they see me dead."

However, with an appearance of composure, ill suited with the pangs he felt, he ordered the disposition of his army, and began his march before day-break. Ours, after a most fatiguing march from five in the evening till one in the morning, which was absolutely necessary, in order to be possessed of Placis town and grove before the enemy could reach it, halted in the grove till day-break; when the Soubah's army appeared marching from their fortified camp before-mentioned, and what with the number of elephants all covered with scarlet cloth and embroidery, their horse with their drawn swords glistening in the sun, their heavy cannon drawn by vast trains of oxen, and their standards flying, they made a most pompous and formidable appearance: And their disposition, as well as the regular manner in which they formed, seemed to speak greater skill in war than we expected from them. But what avails pomp and parade, where the heart is not fired by loyalty to its prince, or love to its country?

At

At six in the morning, June 23, the enemy was discovered marching in a deep column from their old camp. Between every body of four or five thousand was a part of their artillery. In this order they continued marching as if they intended to surround us, as far as the river would permit; but as soon as their rear was got out of the camp, they halted, and a body of about fifty French advanced in front of the rest, their officer calling out in vain for some of the Soubah's troops to follow him: For such was their mistrust of each other, that no commander dared to venture on singly, for fear some other commander, suspected of attachment to us, should fall on him. These advanced under cover of an eminence, to within about five hundred paces of us, and then began a general cannonading. Our little army was at first drawn up without the bank which surrounded the grove, but we soon found such a shower of balls pouring upon us from their fifty pieces of cannon, most of which were thirty two and twenty four pounders, that we retired under cover of the bank, leaving two field pieces without, whilst the other four kept playing through the breaches in the bank. In this posture both armies remained till about twelve; when a heavy shower of rain falling, the enemy's horse advanced, as if they meant to take the advantage of it: but when they found our field-pieces kept firing, notwithstanding the rain, it checked their ardour. The rain ceasing, the cannonading continued till about four in the afternoon, when they began to retire to their old camp, their artillery marching in first. And now we took notice of a large body on our left, moving in such a manner, as to make it doubtful whether their aim was to possess themselves of the village on our left, or whether they were friends, and wanted to join us. However, as no

signal had been agreed on, owing to the miscarriage of a messenger who had been dispatched to us in the morning by Meer Jaffier, we kept them at a distance with our field pieces. When all their artillery was got within their camp, Major Kilpatrick moved forward with about two hundred whites and three hundred seapoys, and possessed himself of the eminence, where the French had been, till they retired with the rest. On this motion, the enemy seemed inclined to come out again on the plain; but Colonel Clive ordering all our fire to be directed against their oxen and drivers, after several attempts they were obliged to give over; and several large bodies of horse began to advance on us, and take possession of an adjacent eminence; but we presently observed their elephants unruly, and great confusion amongst them. The Colonel, conceiving this the moment on which the success of the day depended, immediately ordered the eminence and their camp to be assaulted by the advanced body, and the whole army to march forward. The enemy stood their ground at the eminence, long enough to receive a general volley, when they faced about with great precipitation; and some of their ammunition blowing up, just as Colonel Clive was marching up to their camp, it put them into such a confusion as made them incapable of resistance, and the rout became general. Their camp, baggage, and cannon, all fell into our hands; and we continued the pursuit all night. Thus was this glorious and decisive victory obtained with the trifling loss of about seventy men killed and wounded on our side, and about five or six hundred on the enemy's.

One great cause of our success was, that in the very beginning of the action, we had the good fortune to kill Meer Modun, one of the Soubah's best
and

and most faithful officers, which struck such a terror into him, that he sent for Meer Jaffier, threw his turband at his feet, and told him with a most dejected countenance, "That it was he that must protect that " turband." * Whether this moved Meer Jaffier's compassion, or his politicks were to save appearances with both parties, is uncertain; but he did not offer to join us, only wrote the Colonel a note advising him to push forward, for that the battle was more than half won: In every thing else he stood neuter during the whole action.

Despondency had now taken such possession of the Soubah's soul, that he left the field at four in the evening on an elephant, and made such haste, that he was himself one of the first that carried the news of his defeat to the capital, which he reached that night. Meer Jaffier's troops retired slowly and regularly from the field of action, marching wide of the rest of the Soubah's army; and halted a few miles from us. In the morning the Colonel sent Omar Beg, a Moor-man particularly attached to Meer Jaffier, and Mr. Scrafton, to conduct him to Daudpore, where he halted that night. As soon as he saw the messengers, he advanced forward with his son to meet them; but was far from testifying that joy which might have been expected: Probably, bred up in the treacherous court of Allyverde Caun, he harboured some suspicion that the Colonel might resent his conduct in not joining him conformably to his promises; for afterwards when the guards drew out to receive him as he passed, he started as if he thought it was all over with him; nor did his countenance brighten up, till the Colonel embraced him,

* To have the head uncovered is thought highly shameful in a man of rank,

and saluted him Soubah of the three provinces, advising him to hasten to the capital to prevent its being plundered, and to assume the title of Soubah, in which he would support him with all his force as soon as possible. We continued our joyful march towards the city, and had the pleasure to see the marks of our victory all through our route.—The plains being covered with cannon, trains of oxen, broken carriages, wounded horses, and among the rest an elephant found dead, sixteen miles from the field of battle, with two six pound shot lodged in his body.

Let us now follow Surajah Dowla. On his arrival at the city, he assembled all his great officers, to consult them on this unfortunate event: Some advised him to deliver himself up to the Colonel, against whom he could have no hope of success, having been twice defeated by him. This, which was the most prudent advice, his shallow judgment mistook for treachery. Others advised him to open his treasury to his army, and endeavour by great rewards to spirit them up to make another effort. He seemed to approve of this, immediately ordered three months pay to his army, and dismissed his council with assurances of his heading his troops again in the morning: But, when left by himself, he suffered all the pangs of adversity. His terrified imagination represented every one that approached him as a traitor that wanted to deliver him up: He abandoned himself to his fears, and, knowing not whom to trust, he disguised himself in a mean dress, and stole out of a window in the dead of night, with no attendants but one faithful eunuch.

Before Meer Jaffier could enter the palace, the women of the seraglio had broke loose from their confinement, and carried off jewels to an immense value; while

while the soldiery had broke into the treasury, and carried away great sums of gold. All was anarchy and confusion; the frightened inhabitants stood in dreadful suspense, expecting nothing but massacre and desolation from a victorious army; till the arrival of Messrs. Watts and Walsh, sent forward by the Colonel, and a proclamation issued out, that Meer Jaffier was appointed Soubah by Colonel Clive, turned their fears to astonishment. This, with the news of the halt of our army on the twenty fifth and twenty sixth, restored tranquillity to the city. Meer Jaffier, whether conscious how little he had contributed to our success, or that a Mussulman could not conceive such moderation, when we had the whole in our power, still doubted the reality of his exaltation, and it was with great difficulty that Messrs. Watts and Walsh could prevail on him to act as Soubah.

On the twenty seventh the Colonel entered the city, with two hundred Europeans, and five hundred seapoys, and took up his quarters at a palace near the Soubah. Upon the Colonel's arrival, Jagutseat, and several of the great men, anxious for their fate, sent their submission, with offers of large presents, which the Colonel refused, assuring them he desired nothing but their assistance in settling the government. The next day Meer Jaffier visited the Colonel, and accompanied him in great pomp to Jagutseat's house, where they settled all money affairs.

I do not doubt, but that the sums stipulated by the treaty must appear immense to you; but it must be observed, it was the prevailing and universal notion, that Surajah Dowla had at least forty millions sterling in his treasury, in which we now found ourselves widely deceived; the new Soubah making it evidently appear to us, that if we insisted on the immediate
payment

payment of the whole sum, he would have nothing left wherewith to support his dignity, or secure his power. The Colonel therefore, sensible it would tarnish the glory of our successes, should we distress the Soubah at so critical a time, thought it more consistent with the general interest to accept of one half by the last day of October, and to agree, that the remainder should be paid within the compass of three years, by equal payments every six months. Besides what was stipulated by the treaty, the Soubah was pleased to make a present to the Governor, the Colonel, Committee and Council, and those who had most contributed to our wonderful success; and, before they parted, the Soubah, the Colonel, Jagutseat, and Roydullub, entered into a solemn engagement mutually to support each other against all enemies whatsoever. And now all our suspicions of the perfidiousness of Surajah Dowla proved well founded; for we found in his secretary's hands, copies of letters to Messrs. Bussey and Laws, in one of which, dated in February, a few days after his swearing a solemn peace with us, he presses Mons. Bussey to send him two thousand men, under the command of trusty officers; and in another, invites him with his whole force into his country: And he writes to Mr. Laws, in April, to desire him to come down immediately, for that he was determined to fall upon the English. Thus we see it was with no less justice than prudence, that we suspected the Soubah's treachery; and it appears how necessary it was for us to have guarded against it, at a time when we wanted the full proofs victory now threw into our hands: For nothing can be more evident, than that if we had trusted to the flattering appearances he endeavoured to amuse us with at the time of the tedious negotiation that preceded the battle

battle of Placis, we had certainly fallen the victims of our own credulity.

On the twenty ninth the Colonel went to the Soubah's palace, and, in presence of all the Rajahs and great men of the court, led him to his Musland; * and, in compliance with the custom of the country, made his submission to him as Soubah, by presenting him with a few pieces of gold, in which he was followed by all the great men present. From this time Meer Jaffier assumed the title of Mohabet Jung, † and acted as Soubah of the three provinces. Now ensued a scene of triumph of a different kind.

The first fruit of our success, was the receipt of near a million sterling, which the Soubah paid us on the third of July, and was laden on board two hundred boats, part of the fleet that attended us in our march up, escorted by a detachment from the army. As soon as they entered the great river, they were joined by the boats of the squadron, and all together formed a fleet of three hundred boats, with music playing, drums beating, and colours flying, and exhibited to the French and Dutch, by whose settlements they passed, a scene far different from what they had beheld the year before, when the Nabob's fleet and army passed them, with the captive English, and all the wealth and plunder of Calcutta. Which scene gave them most pleasure, I will not presume to decide; nor will I attempt to convey an idea of the vast joy of our countrymen at Calcutta, when they heard of our victory.

While we were thus happy in our success, Surajah Dowla was travelling in disguise, like a miserable fugitive, towards Patna, where he hoped once more

* Carpet of state.

† Terrible in war.

to appear in arms ; but being discovered by the governor of Rajamaul, Meer Jaffier's brother, he was surrounded, and advice of it reaching the Soubah, he immediately sent his son to take him prisoner, and bring him to the city, where he arrived on the fourth of July at night, unknown to the Colonel, and was privately put to death by the Soubah's order, who came in the morning to apologize for having taken such a step without consulting him, and to palliate an act which he was sensible the Colonel would highly disapprove. It was not till many months after, that we became acquainted with all the circumstances of his death, which were as follows. On his arrival at the city, the Soubah held a council of his most intimate friends, about the disposal of him, who all agreed, that it would be dangerous to grant him his life, and that he should immediately be put to death, lest the Colonel's clemency and moderation should plead for his preservation. Surajah Dowla received the dreadful sentence trembling ; he wept bitterly, and pleaded hard for life on any terms ; but, when he found all intreaty in vain, he desired only a delay of a few moments to wash and say his prayers. His merciless executioners flung a pot of water over him, and dispatched him with their swords. His remains were exposed on an elephant round the city, and then interred near the tomb of his grandfather.

Revenge seems glutted by so tragical a catastrophe, and compassion for a while takes place. But though we may commiserate his unhappy fate, let us not forget how justly he deserved it. From his first obtaining power under his grandfather, he had ever made it subservient to ambition, revenge, and cruelty. His treacherous assassination of Hossein Cooley Caun, and his nephew ; the wanton cruelty and injustice of attacking

tacking the English, who, by the immense wealth they had yearly brought into the country, for a century past, had greatly contributed to its rich and flourishing state, and certainly had done nothing to make them the objects of his resentment; but above all, the death of the gentlemen in prison, for which, though not occasioned by his immediate order, when he was told of it in the morning, he testified no concern (and even then might have saved the lives of many who had some little life left in them, and might have been recovered by bleeding and proper care) but suffered, if he did not order them, to be thrown with the dead into the ditch; these cruelties called aloud for severe justice: and yet, I dare say, even these were far short of what we should have suffered, had he been conqueror at Placis; for there was found in his standish, a list of thirteen of his courtiers whom he had doomed to death, and it is probable he would not have shewn more mercy to us. His short reign of only one year was passed in war, and in fleecing and punishing those, who, in the late reign, had been of his rival's party. He was rapacious, prodigal, and ambitious; but his ambition had neither valour nor wisdom to support it: Yet, unqualified as he was, it is thought he aimed at the conquest of Dehli and the whole empire, for he was preparing a magnificent throne, and intended shortly to have assumed the title of Shaw, or king.

Whoever reflects on this amazing revolution, must acknowledge the hand of providence in it. Our first calamity seemed like a final dissolution, and the whole colony to be lost irretrievably. Our enemy's contempt was then our security. But even when our forces arrived, what prospect was there that such a handful of men should overcome such numerous forces? forces thought sufficient by their master to sub-
vert

vert one of the most powerful governments of Asia, and to secure to him the possession of the throne of Aurengzebe. Who could then have been sanguine enough to flatter himself with the hopes of seeing the wealth of the tyrant's capital, the fruits of many years eastern oppression, transferred to that settlement he had so proudly overthrown but a few months before almost in an instant !

These glorious successes have brought near three millions sterling to the nation ; for, properly speaking, almost the whole of the immense sums received from the Soubah, finally centers in England. So great a proportion of it fell into the company's hands, either from their own share, or by sums paid into the treasury at Calcutta for bills and receipts, that they have been enabled to carry on the whole trade of India, China excepted, for three years together, without sending out one ounce of bullion. Vast sums have been also remitted through the hands of foreign companies, which weigh in the balance of trade to their amount in our favour with such foreign nations. And to these let me add, the mischief done to our enemies the French, now totally driven out from those settlements which were the only support of their India trade.

Nothing was now wanting to complete our success, but to get the Soubah confirmed from court ; for the better obtaining of which the Colonel wrote a letter to the Emperor to the following purport, which was accompanied by another nearly in the same strain from the Soubah ; “ That the English had
“ been long settled in these countries, by virtue of a
“ phirmaund from the emperor Furruckseer ; and Cal-
“ cutta was become a very great and populous place,
“ and its merchants carried on a trade which enriched
“ the

“ the whole country ; that they had always lived in
“ perfect harmony and friendship with the Soubah of
“ the province, until the death of Mahabut Jung,
“ who was succeeded by Surajah Dowla, who, even
“ before he had received the royal confirmation, with-
“ out any cause or notice given, fell on the English,
“ who, being destitute of all the implements of war,
“ were entirely defeated ; that he took Calcutta and
“ plundered it on the twentieth of June 1756, and
“ put to death in one night all the great men, and
“ other Englishmen, who fell into his hands ; that
“ Admiral Watson and himself, both servants of the
“ king of England, were come to revenge these in-
“ juries with a powerful army ; that they had re-
“ possessed themselves of the ruins of Calcutta, and
“ drove his people from Houghly ; that Surajah Dowla,
“ priding himself in his numbers, came down against
“ them with a great army, which, by the blessing of
“ God, he totally defeated on the fifth of February
“ 1757 ; but, that reflecting how injurious war was
“ to his Majesty’s dominions, he made peace with
“ him ; to the observance of which, Surajah Dowla,
“ swore by God and his prophet Mahomet ; yet a
“ very few days being elapsed, regardless of his oath,
“ he joined with the enemies of the English to destroy
“ them ; that he, Colonel Clive, had several times
“ warned him of the fatal consequences of his un-
“ faithful conduct ; but that he scorned his friendship,
“ and met him with a numerous army, over which
“ he, by the blessing of God, obtained a complete vic-
“ tory on the plains of Placis, June 23, 1757 ; that
“ in the pursuit Surajah Dowla was killed, and, by
“ the consent of all the great men of the province,
“ Meer Jaffier was appointed to succeed him, a man
“ just and merciful, as his predecessor was wicked,
“ proud,

“proud, and cruel, who implored his Majesty to con-
 “firm him in his dignity; that he had joined him
 “with a powerful army, and, by the blessing of God,
 “nothing should be wanting to make the country
 “flourish, and the people happy; that in the course
 “of these troubles, nothing had been done to the in-
 “jury of his Majesty’s dominions; and that he was
 “ready, with his life, to obey his Majesty’s com-
 “mands.”

A revolution, so sudden and unexpected, filled every
 one with terror and astonishment, which was kept up
 by the march of a considerable detachment, under the
 command of Capt. Coote, in pursuit of Mons. Laws,
 who marched from Patna at the head of an hundred
 French, the only remains of that nation in all the
 three provinces, to the assistance of the late Soubah,
 and were within a few hours march of him when he
 was taken prisoner; but they returned on Capt. Coote’s
 approach, who followed them till they had passed the
 boundaries of the Soubah’s dominions. The Na-
 bob of Patna was one Ramnaran, a Gentoo, faithfully
 attached to his late master, who, supposing Meer Jaf-
 fier would not confirm him in his government, was
 meditating a junction with the Soubah of Oude, the
 son of the late visir, whose territories border on those
 of Patna. There was such evident proof of this, that
 Colonel Clive advised the Soubah to displace him,
 which was approved, accepted, and the order sent;
 but different passions now began to operate, and the
 Nabob, from some unknown motive, determined to ef-
 fect his purpose by other means.

Whoever considers human nature will easily per-
 ceive, that the harmony between the Soubah and
 us was liable to many interruptions. As the brute
 creation retain no longer their affections for their pa-
 rents

rents than while they need their help to nourish them, so the Soubah, now feeling his own strength, forgot the authors of his greatness. He seemed to look on us rather as rivals than allies; and his first thoughts were, how to check our power, and evade the execution of the treaty. In vain did the Colonel represent to him, that, instead of draining his treasury for keeping such an immense army on foot, he had better dismiss one half of them, and rely on the English, who were his natural allies, bound to him by mutual interest, and every tie that could enforce our inviolable attachment. He formed his plan quite differently, and seemed to think himself sufficiently powerful to dispute with us the remainder of the treaty; and to this he bent all his future politics, the natural consequence of which was, that we were necessitated to strengthen ourselves, by forming a party in his own court to be a continual check upon him, a matter by no means difficult in a country where loyalty and gratitude are virtues almost unknown. I have before mentioned Roydullub as closely connected with Meer Jaffier, and a fellow conspirator of equal rank; such connections are seldom permanent: He thought the Soubah had not rewarded him according to his merit, and the Soubah thought him too craving. In all, but more especially in those eastern courts, jealousy is a weed that grows apace. Sycophants and hungry minions nourish it with lies and whispers, and live under its shade. The Colonel entered into strict engagements with this man, to protect him as far as life and honour, provided he attempted nothing against the Soubah's person or government; and he promised to use all the power and interest his posts gave him, to oblige the Soubah to the faithful execution of the articles of the treaty. The

close connection which appeared between us, widened the breach between them, till mutual mistrust increased to that pitch, that each began to strengthen his party. Roydullub endeavoured to gain the officers of the army to him; and the Soubah dismissed from his court all those who had shewed too great an attachment to a minister he had made too powerful; for he was first Treasurer, Pay-master of the troops, and general of a large body of horse and foot, and his brother and relations occupied the most beneficial employs at court. These made him powerful; but it was the English protection that made him formidable to his master. But the season now approached for taking the field; and in October 1757, the Soubah fixed his standard to the north, with great expectations of rendering himself as powerful and arbitrary as his old master Allyverde, whose example he endeavoured to imitate in his government. He had projected a very extensive plan, to which he was by no means equal. First, he proposed the destruction of Roydullub and his party. Secondly, to crush the rebellion broke out in Purneha, where the late Governor refused to own his authority. Thirdly, by force or stratagem to get the Nabob of Patna into his power, and give that province to his brother. And having made himself thus powerful, he finally proposed to awe the English into the relinquishing the remainder of the money due to them, and the other articles stipulated by the treaty. This project opened with the death of Mirza Mundeë, Surajah Dowla's brother, a weak helpless youth, whom his spies and parasites had insinuated to him Roydullub intended to set up for Soubah. The same jealousy induced him to send the widow of Allyverde into confinement at Dacca; and a strict watch was kept over an infant-son left by Fazel Cooley Caun,

Caun, the son of Zaindë Hamet, whom Nowagis Mahumud Caun adopted, and who died some years before, leaving this only child, called Morada Dowla.

These steps so alarmed Roydullub, that, under pretence of sickness, he absented himself from court, and declined taking the field with the Soubah. This was the first obstacle the Soubah met with ; and now' he began to apprehend, that, should he march from his capital, it was possible the Colonel, penetrating his view, might join with Roydullub, and attack his son, whom he left governor in his absence. He long hesitated what part to act with the Colonel ; but at last determined writing to him, to desire him to march up with his troops, hoping either to awe him by the parade of his numerous forces, or win him by profitable offers to abandon Roydullub. The Colonel, sensible how easy it was to check him in his flight, let him go on in his airy ideas, contenting himself with giving frequent hints, that he saw what he was aiming at ; but always assured him he would find, in the end, his true interest was to preserve the friendship of the English, by a strict adherence to the treaty, for that it was them, and them only, that were able to support him : But now that he saw the Soubah's jealousy was incurable, he determined to check him effectually. Force alone could not effect this ; for the debauchery introduced by the prize-money of Placis, and the unwholsomeness of the climate, had reduced our fine army to about four hundred and fifty Europeans, and twelve hundred seapoys ; policy was therefore deemed a necessary ally.

With this small force, and the name of Clive, we took the field in November, and were joined by Roydullub, whose political sickness vanished at the approach of our army. At their first interview, the Colonel reproached the Soubah with his weak and

unfaithful conduct ; reminded him of the agreement entered into at Jagutseat's house, declaring himself Roydullub's protector ; and demanded security for the payment of the remainder of the treaty-money, of which even the first half was not yet paid, although the time was elapsed for the first payment of the second half. The Soubah now felt his chains, and found, that the more he struggled, the closer they sat. After many vain attempts, by threats and caresses, to shake the Colonel's constancy, he at last, with a very ill grace, made over to the company the revenues of the three provinces of Burdwan, Nuddea, and Houghly, for the remainder of the treaty-money ; and then the two armies marched forward. At this place the Colonel entertained the Soubah with a review of our little army, to which he came in great state, in a car drawn by two elephants, accompanied by two of his children and several of his courtiers. The troops went through all their firings and evolutions with great briskness and regularity ; and the Soubah seemed lost in amazement, at the quickness and uniformity of their motions ; but nothing struck him so much as the quick firing of the field pieces, which, he said, exceeded every thing he could possibly have imagined ; and he was altogether so well pleased with his entertainment, that he ordered ten thousand rupees to be distributed among them, for which the soldiers returned him their thanks, by three English huzzas. This review had a very good effect, by pointing out to the Soubah, how irresistible such a close compact body of infantry, where every man is sure of being assisted by his neighbour, is to the loose irregular attacks of a confused multitude, where no man has any reliance, but on the strength of his arm.

I heard the Soubah discoursing of this review amongst his courtiers ; and, after expressing his admiration, said,

“ These

“ These people are not to be fought with at a distance ;
“ but if we were to rush on them with our sabres,
“ we should bear them down ;” but he did not discern, that they have no principle powerful enough to unite them together for such an impetuous attack. Military discipline is so contradictory to the genius and constitution of the people, that neither example nor experience can ever make them capable of it ; and the common apprehension of our teaching the Indians to beat us, is without the least foundation. It is not that they want natural courage, but they have no motive to spur them on to danger, except the example of their leader, who is always mounted on an elephant, equally conspicuous to his own men and our field pieces, and his death is sure to be followed by the flight of his troops. Colonel Clive has indeed made use of this principle to great advantage, in disciplining our seapoys, by forming them into battalions, under the command of the best of our officers ; since which they have, on several occasions, proved little inferior to Europeans. On the approach of our united forces, the rebels of Purrhunea dispersed, and the Soubah made his brother-in-law, Cossim Hossain Caun, Nabob of that province, and then marched towards Patna, hoping by force or stratagem to get Ramnaran into his power, and make his brother Nabob of that province ; but neither scheme succeeded. Ramnaran had taken the field with a very considerable army, and could not be prevailed on to trust himself in the Soubah’s power, till he was assured of the Colonel’s protection. The Soubah was very averse to this, but soon found, that Roydullub had won over the greatest part of his officers, who were more likely to espouse Ramnaran’s cause than his own. He at last consented to the Colonel’s mediation, which he gladly granted,

from the motive that it would be a constant check on the Soubah, to have the Nabob of Patna devoted to us.

He therefore, at the Soubah's request, wrote Ramnaran, that he might come with safety. The Colonel's reputation for the inviolable observance of his word, was such, that Ramnaran immediately left his army, and came with a few followers to the English camp. He then went, accompanied by Mr. Watts, to pay his submission to the Soubah, who received him with a constrained graciousness, and his army joined the rest in their route to Patna.

The Soubah, who burnt with desire to free himself from our yoke, now formed a project, from which he hoped some relief. He ordered Coja Haddeë, a general who commanded sixteen thousand men, to make a forced march, and enter the city before our army, which had always been the van of the whole. This officer was much suspected of an attachment to Roydullub, and therefore the Soubah aimed at embroiling him in a skirmish with us, indifferent who had the advantage, where he wanted to be rid of both. He accordingly gave him orders, that when he entered the city, he should shut the gates, and permit no troops to enter the city without farther orders. Coja Haddeë not perceiving the snare, passed our army in proper order for action. When the Colonel came near the city, he sent word to Coja Haddeë, that the Soubah had laid this snare to destroy him, and advised him not to oppose him, as he was determined to enter. Coja Haddeë immediately retired, and sent the Soubah a message that he presumed his orders could not regard his friend Sabut Jung *, whom he had let

* The title conferred on Colonel Clive by the court of Dehli. It means *the proved warrior*.

pass. The Colonel marched through the city, and encamped on the opposite side. The Soubah followed with fullen slowness, mortified at his disappointment, and enraged to see the Colonel carrying away the glory of the campaign, while himself appeared only as his general. And now ensued a scene of plots and conspiracies, wherein the several actors displayed the arts of treachery and dissimulation with all the refined subtlety of eastern politicians.

I have already mentioned, the Soubah's views this campaign were, to break the power of the minister; make his brother Nabob of Patna; oblige the Rajahs of that rebellious province to submit to him; and, finally, to awe the English into the relinquishing of the treaty-money. Let us now see how the different parties endeavoured to counteract him.

Ramnaran and Roydullub soon found they were tending to the same center, which was the destruction of a master they thought they could never trust. Coja Haddeë, Cossim Ally Caun, and most of the general officers, were of their party, and entered into a written agreement to support each other. They frequently sounded Colonel Clive, and endeavoured, by every artifice and stratagem, to set him at open variance with the Soubah; while their party at court acted the same part with the Soubah, by continually insinuating to him, that the Colonel was won over by Roydullub and Ramnaran, and would certainly attempt his life. While the Soubah's mind was thus agitated by suspicions of all parties, an accident happened, that almost brought every body to lay aside the mask, and act in their real characters. Colonel Clive kept his head-quarters at the English factory, the army being encamped to the westward of Patna; the Nabob's camp was to the eastward, but a vast number of his troops were

were in the city, as were also Ramnaran's; and with the Colonel was a guard of two hundred seapoys. Near the factory was quartered a body of Ramnaran's horse, and both used the same market. A dispute arose between them, which from words came to blows, and some of the Colonel's seapoys were wounded. They came to complain, and the Colonel permitted them to go and take their own revenge. They immediately sallied out, and attacked the horsemen, whom they soon routed, and one or two of them were killed. The alarm spread instantly throughout the city; all parties were in arms; spies were running backwards and forwards over the city; every one making a different report, according to the fears or wishes of their master. The Soubah, who had his head-quarters in a palace on the eastern side of the city, immediately suspected Colonel Clive, Ramnaran and Roydullub, were forming a design to attack him. Full of this thought, he instantly put his women, papers, and jewels, on elephants, sent a party to secure his retreat, and put all his troops under arms. Roydullub and Ramnaran were also under arms, and it was a miracle the city was not fired and plundered. But as the rise of this disorder was entirely accidental, so nobody was prepared to take any advantage of it; and, by the intercourse of messengers, the tumult subsided, and every one sheltered himself under the cloak of dissimulation; first reflecting, whether they had done any thing in the first heat of the alarm that might have betrayed their sentiments? The next morning all the grandees visited Colonel Clive; and the commander of the horse, whose people had begun the skirmish with the English seapoys, was ordered out of the city. The Soubah lived in continual apprehensions, but the Colonel was too steady to be led astray by any of them: His honour, and the public interest, strongly

strongly attached him to the Soubah ; though at the same time, it was our interest to reduce his power to proper limits, which nothing could more effectually restrain, than supporting Ramnaran in the Nabobship of Patna, and Roydullub in the ministry ; and just so far he entered into their views. The Rajahs refused to pay their submissions but through the mediation of the Colonel, which the Soubah was too haughty to accept ; and the close connection between Ramnaran and Roydullub, both supported by us, prevented the rest. Thus the Soubah, equally mistrusting, and mistrusted of all, had the mortification to see all his projects vanish. The only satisfaction he had, was the receiving his confirmation from Dehli, on the same terms as Allyverde Caun ; which were, the payment of fifty two lacks per annum, with the usual presents of elephants, cloth, etc. The Colonel at the same time received the dignity of an Omrah of the empire, and the title of Zubdut Ulmulk Nussceera Dowla, Sahbut Jung Bahader *, though the charters for holding it did not arrive till some time after,

When the Soubah found that all his endeavours to win the Colonel were in vain, he endeavoured to outstay him, hoping his presence would be required in Calcutta, and that he would be obliged to abandon his friends to him : But even that proving ineffectual, he, at last, after a stay of four months, at an immense expence, was obliged to confirm Ramnaran in the Nabobship of Patna, Roydullub in the ministry, and to return to his capital, totally disappointed in all his views ; whilst the Colonel not only got the provinces mortgaged to the company for the remainder of the treaty, but obtained also the farm of salt-

* *The perfection of the empire, the sword of victory, the proved intrepid warrior.*

petre, which was before farmed out to one of the natives, on condition of their paying the Soubah forty thousand rupees per annum, and filled the province with admiration of his wise conduct, and steady adherence to all whose interest he espoused, which, we shall hereafter see, was of signal service to him. The Colonel arrived at Muxadavad the first of June, where he was met by Major Forde, whom the gentlemen of Calcutta had persuaded to enter into the company's service, and to him he left the command of the army, and proceeded himself to Calcutta, where he was received with every demonstration of the sincerest joy.

I have been so taken up with the political transactions, that I have omitted to mention, in its proper place, the death of Mr. Watson, who died in August, much lamented by the fleet and settlement; and whose memory will be ever revered for his generous and disinterested conduct. The public loss was indeed in a great measure alleviated, by the command devolving on so brave and capable an officer as Mr. Pocock, who left the river with the squadron in February.

Hitherto we had met with a continued series of success, which now seemed for a while suspended, by the arrival of the French fleet on the coast of Coromandel, commanded by Mons. d'Aché, with three thousand Europeans on board, under the command of Lieutenant General Lally and many officers of the first distinction in France; a force, which seemed to threaten the destruction of all our settlements in India. In this danger, our sole reliance was on the vigilance and bravery of our fleet; and happily we were not deceived. Mr. Pocock, though much inferior in force, sought the first opportunity to engage them, while yet very few of their men were landed. The engagement

gagement was very bloody to the French, and, but for some untoward circumstances, would have ended in the ruin of their fleet and army; but night favoured their escape, and they got safe into Pondicherry, with the loss of only one 64 gun ship, and upwards of five hundred men killed and wounded, as appeared by an intercepted letter from the French secretary.

This did not prevent the loss of Fort St. David's; and we had now little hope of receiving succours from England. The Directors, by the same letters that advised us of this force sailing from France, gave their Governors abroad to understand, that they left them to the protection of Providence; for that the breaking out of the war with France rendered it impracticable to send out any considerable forces this year. At this crisis, when military virtue and unanimity were more immediately necessary, the Directors, divided by violent contests among themselves, which certainly did them no honour, were so unfortunate in their judgments as to appoint four governors of Bengal, to govern each four months, and left Colonel Clive entirely out of the list. The absurdity of such a system was too apparent to take place. The gentlemen named to this temporary honour, with great disinterestedness declined it, and joined with the whole settlement in requesting Colonel Clive to take the government on himself. The Colonel, thus slighted, might have returned to his native country, and there enjoyed his immense and honourably acquired fortune; but, his patriotic spirit, and regard for the public welfare, prevailed over private resentment, and on the twenty-third of June 1758, the anniversary of the victory of Plassey, he entered upon the government, to the great joy of every one.

The

The arrival of the French Squadron, and the loss of Fort St. David's, had an instant effect on our influence in the country. The Colonel considering, that if the Soubah could be prevailed on to pay him a visit in Calcutta, it would deceive our enemies into a firm persuasion, that there subsisted a perfect amity between us, sent Mr. Watts to him with the invitation, which he readily accepted. I must here do the Soubah the justice to say, that, however jealous of the English power, he has ever shewn a sincere regard for the Colonel.

This outward appearance of harmony was equally necessary to the Soubah, as it was our alliance alone which made him formidable to his neighbours; but, observing how much we courted his friendship, he thought he might now execute his designs against Roydullub. He left the city under charge of his son, first dismissing his minister from all his employments; and, to all appearance, left an order with his son to put him to death; for no sooner was his father out of his sight, than he prepared to attack him: But, as our reputation and influence in the country entirely depended on our protecting him in his life and honour, Mr. Scrafton, then resident at the Nabob's court, marched a company of men to his assistance, and took him under his protection. The Soubah, who was very little advanced on his way, was alarmed at this, and seemed determined to return; but Mr. Watts had address enough, not only to persuade him to continue his journey, but to let Roydullub come down to Calcutta: The Soubah was glad he had carried his point so far as to have dismissed him from his post, without our resenting it; and the Colonel was pleased to have kept his word, which extended no further than the protection of his life and honour. The Soubah was most magnificently entertained,

ed, had very great presents made him, returned well satisfied to his capital, and left Roydullub in Calcutta.

This visit had the desired effect: The French, as well as the Soubah's enemies, conjectured, if they attempted any thing against Bengal, they should find our united forces against them. The French were now so powerful on the coast of Coromandel, having at least four thousand Europeans and six thousand seapoys, that we began to fear for Madras.—I before mentioned, that the French had an army in the Decan, from which country they drew a considerable revenue. The Colonel, apprehensive they might add that army to their other forces, boldly resolved, against the unanimous opinion of his council, to send a great part of our force into that country, with a view to make a diversion that might call off part of the French force from the coast of Coromandel. For that purpose Major Forde embarked with four hundred and twenty Europeans, and one thousand four hundred Seapoys, with a suitable train of artillery, and amply provided with stores of all kinds, and landed at Vizagapatam, the Rajah of that country having desired our assistance against the French.

The departure of so great a part of our force made the Soubah more haughty in his conduct. He had lately cut off two of his general officers, Coja Hadjee and Cossim Ally Caun, whom I have before mentioned to be of Roydullub's party. The former he ordered out of the country, and in his passage through the pass of Sicklagully, he ordered the mountaineers and governor of Rajamall to fall on him; the other his son assassinated at an entertainment. And now he sent a forged letter, to prove, that Roydullub was concerned with them in a conspiracy to murder him; but the forgery was evidently proved, and the Colonel persevered

vered in protecting him. The Soubah seemed inclined to resent this protection, and hinted, that he expected the mortgaged provinces should be restored to him; but the news of Colonel Forde's success checked him for the present. That brave and experienced officer, with his small army, defeated the French army commanded by the Marquis de Conflans, consisting of five hundred Europeans and six thousand disciplined seapoys; and continued his pursuit of them towards Masulipatam, the French capital of Golconda.

But now a new scene opened. The Mogul's son had escaped from the hands of the Vizir, who kept the Emperor himself and all his family as a kind of state prisoners, and appeared in arms on the frontiers of the province of Bahar. The Soubah had lately given such proofs of his inclination to avoid all farther connections with us, that he apprehended the Colonel would not be very ready to assist him; and therefore declined, as long as possible, acquainting him with the threatened invasion: but, like a slothful man, who is not sensible of his weakness till occasion requires him to put his strength to the trial, now that the exigency of his affairs demanded he should exert himself, he found how little able he was to cope with an enemy. The immense forces he had kept up to no manner of purpose, having eighty thousand men at least in his pay, had quite exhausted his treasury, and vast arrears were still due to them; Far from assisting him, they even threatened his life, if he did not immediately comply with their demands: All he could do was to satisfy a part of them, who took the field under his son's command, and might be about four thousand horse and as many foot. In the mean time the Prince, or Shahzada, had crossed the Carumnassa, which is the boundary of Bahar, where he was joined by the Soubah

bah of Oude's brother and some of the Boujepore Rajahs, and was on full march towards Patna at the head of forty thousand men, with Mons. Laws and his little party of a hundred French and two hundred Seapoys. Ramnaran thought this was the opportunity for him to throw off his obedience to Meer Jaffier, and seemed determined to declare for the Shazahda. Thus every thing looked as if the Soubah would lose his life and government, without a sword being drawn in his behalf. In this distress he at last applied to Colonel Clive, now confirmed governor by the company's appointment.

The company's affairs were now in almost as critical a situation as the Soubah's. The siege of Madras was actually begun, and we had sent thither part of the forces that came out in this year's shipping; so that our whole force was but three hundred infantry, one hundred train, and two thousand five hundred seapoys, most of whom had never seen an action. Nevertheless, the Colonel hesitated not a moment, but immediately began his march to Muxadavad, where he arrived on the twentieth of March. He reproached the Soubah severely for his weak, unsteady conduct, particularly for the manner in which he had destroyed his two general officers, which had quite alienated the affections of his army from him, and for his late behaviour to the English; but assured him, he might rely on his utmost endeavours to extricate him from the difficulties he was involved in, and that himself and all his army would fight for him to the last man. The Colonel immediately continued his march, and the Soubah promised to follow in a few days. All parties had their eyes fixed on the Colonel. The Shahzada invited him pressingly to join him, offering him

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a share in the government, and any advantages he pleased to ask on behalf of the company; and, flattering himself the Colonel might be brought over to him, he would not bring Law's party with him, but left them at Benares, lest it should disgust the Colonel. The Nabob of Patna, not hearing of the Colonel's march, had entered into a treaty with the Shahzada, by which he promised to declare for him, on condition, that the Shahzada confirmed him in his Nabobship, and that his army should not enter the city: This was agreed to, and Ramnaran came out of the city, paid his submission to the Shahzada, and made him a present of a considerable sum of money. The Shahzada's army passed the city, and encamped towards Bengal; and a day or two after, he sent to Ramnaran for some more money and the city cannon. The messengers affected the haughty airs of conquerors, to which Ramnaran was not inclined to submit, as he had now heard of the Colonel's march, and indeed had received a letter from him to this purport, "That as it was by his mediation he had been confirmed in his government, he looked on himself as responsible to the Soubah for his fidelity; that if he offered to swerve from his duty, he should feel his utmost resentment; that he was marching towards him with all expedition, and flattered himself, that the same Providence which had blessed him with victory on so many occasions, would not now forsake him." Intimidated by this letter, and full of the hopes of a speedy relief, he turned the Prince's messengers out of the city, and shut the gates against him. The Shahzada, surpris'd and enraged at this sudden change, immediately began the siege. The Colonel's approach made all parties act
with

with vigour. The Prince made several assaults, and was very near carrying the place, when the appearance of our army, which had marched four hundred miles in three and twenty days, obliged him to raise the siege; on which his army, which had been brought together only by the hopes of plunder, dispersed, leaving him only the Soubah of Oude's brother, and a few horse, who made the best of their way out of the province. Thus was the Soubah once more indebted to us for his life and government, both which must have inevitably fallen, but for this vigorous effort; for so little able was he to support himself, that, far from joining us, his troops surrounded him, and refused to march, till they had all their arrears, and two months pay advanced them. And even the few forces that marched with his son, made a dead halt when we drew near the enemy, and would not advance a step without their arrears, so that had the enemy stood, we must have borne the whole brunt of the action with our little army; but the name of CLIVE struck such a terror into them, that they would not abide his coming, though they were now joined by the French (whom the Shahzada had sent for when he despaired of winning the Colonel over to him) and must have taken the place, had they continued another day before it, for though Mons. Laws's party was so trifling, it was sufficient to have carried one of the city towers, at which the whole army might have entered: But such was the reputation of our arms, that though they had repeated and certain intelligence of the small number of our forces, they thought it folly to offer to contend with us. Nor is this astonishing to those who know what strong fatalists these eastern people are, who look on fighting against a fortunate man, as contending

with GOD HIMSELF. When you tell them of a successful commander, they never ascribe his successes to any human virtue, but lift up their eyes, and say, "A happy fate attends him;" and when once a man has gained the reputation of being fortunate, nothing seems desperate in their eyes.

On the tenth of April, the Colonel entered Patna in triumph, and received the thanks and congratulations of all ranks of persons there. But to Meer Jaffier the news was as the gift of life to a condemned man; His troops that had surrounded him, and seemed to rejoice in his adversity, were now as servile as they had been insolent before; but they soon felt his resentment, by the dismissal of the greatest part of them from his service, convinced at last that he might rely on the English. During our march, we had the pleasure to hear of Mons. Lally's retreat from Madras, after a siege of sixty-seven days. Were it not foreign to my subject, I could, with pleasure, dwell on the gallant actions of Governor Piggot, Colonels Laurence and Draper, Messieurs Brereton, Monson, Caillaud, Preston and other gentlemen, both of the King's and Company's troops, who distinguished themselves in that brave defence.

This good news was soon followed by that of the astonishing success of the expedition under Major Forde. That intrepid officer, after struggling through many difficulties, in a long march through an enemy's country, and in want of money, at last appeared before Masulipatam, with his little army, now reduced to three hundred and fifty Europeans, and one thousand two hundred seapoys. He found it a city fortified after the European manner, surrounded by a salt morass, and defended by the Marquis de Conflans, with four hundred fifty regulars, a hundred citizens and other Europeans, and six thousand

thousand disciplined seapoys. At the same time, the Soubah of the Decan was marching to the relief of it, at the head of an immense army of his own, and a party of two hundred Frenchmen; and before he had made any progress in the siege, the Soubah was advanced so near, that Major Forde, finding he could not retreat without risking his whole army, desperately resolved to assault the place, though there was no way of approaching it, but through a morass waist-deep. Under all these disadvantages he attempted it, and was successful, though with the loss of a fourth part of his little army. The Marquis and five hundred and twenty two Frenchmen were taken prisoners; and the Soubah of the Decan, not caring to contend with a conqueror, returned. To add more to the Major's successes, two days after the place was taken, there appeared two French ships in the road, with four hundred and fifty men on board, for the relief of the place, who seeing English colours flying, thought fit to sail away; and the season not permitting their return to Pondicherry, they landed at Ganjam, where they were surrounded by the country Rajahs, who so reduced them by famine and skirmishing, that very few escaped to Pondicherry, so that this expedition all together cost the French a thousand Europeans. All our affairs being so happily circumstanced, Colonel Clive, at the Soubah's request, marched to punish those Rajahs, who had joined the Shahzada. These Rajahs are so powerful, by the nature of their country, that they had never been thoroughly subdued, and had always been formidable to the Nabobs of Patna. When we drew near their country, two of them, intimidated by the reputation of our arms, came and made their submission, and were obliged to pay the Soubah all the revenues due from them for several years past. The third, who had been

been more guilty, kept aloof, and we were obliged to follow him amidst his rocks and mountains, exposed to the most terrible heats that ever Europeans underwent; but he was pressed so close, that at last, he was obliged to submit under very severe terms.

The unfortunate Shahzada, whose amiable character deserved a better fate, soon perceived the Colonel was the only obstacle to his success; and, having found he was not to be allured by the flattering prosperity that for some time attended him, endeavoured now to make an impression on him by his misfortunes. He represented to the Colonel, in a very pathetic letter, the peculiar wretchedness of his fate; "That, though born to a crown, the persecution of the Vizir had left him not a spot to rest on; that he had no intentions against Meer Jaffier's life or government; that all he aimed at, was an army to make head against the Vizir; and, that if it pleased God to favour his cause, the Colonel might command any advantages for the company or himself." This the Colonel communicated to the Soubah's son and Ramnaran, who both agreed it would be dangerous to have a prince of the blood in any of the provinces; that he would prove a constant source of plots and conspiracies against the Soubah; would draw on him the resentment of the Vizir, and finally involve the country in continual troubles. The Colonel therefore sent back the messenger with a respectful letter and a present of five hundred gold mohurs.* His behaviour so charmed the prince, that he sent him word, he would force himself under his protection and dare him to deliver him up; but the Colonel was necessitated to answer, that he acted under the Soubah's orders, and would therefore by no means advise him to put himself in his power. The unhappy Shahzada was obliged to seek some other refuge;

* About £. 1000 sterling.

and the Colonel, to intimidate the neighbouring powers from ever disturbing the Soubah again, thought fit to shew his resentment to Sujah Dowla †, by writing to him, "That, as he could not but know, the inviolable friendship subsisting between him and Meer Jaffier, he wondered he should presume to send forces into his country; that if he still persisted in sentiments of enmity, he should own it frankly, and he would march up again after the rains, and appeal to the decision of the sword." This letter, though addressed to as powerful and haughty a prince as any in the east, had its full effect, and produced a very submissive answer.

In July, after leaving a detachment of a hundred Europeans, and a thousand seapoys, to awe the late submitted Rajahs, the Colonel returned to Muxadavad, where he was received with the most unfeigned joy by the Soubah, and gazed at with awful respect, by all his people. The Soubah acknowledged, he once more owed his life and government to him. And as a token of his gratitude and esteem, conferred on him the Lordship of the lands held by the Company, who are only perpetual renters, by which the Company, as hereditary landholders, pay him the revenues due to the Soubah, amounting to about thirty thousand pounds sterling per annum, which revenues they had for two years before, paid to the Soubah himself, being the time they had been put into possession of those lands. This was given him as a revenue to support the dignity of an Omrah of the Empire, for which he is supposed to maintain six thousand men, and, in the country language, is called a Jaghire, a tenure not

† Sujah Dowla, is Soubah of the next provinces to the north east, called the Soubahship of Oude. He is son of the late Vizir Monsur Ali Caun, and is the most formidable Soubah of India, with respect to the goodness of his troops, but he is not rich.

unlike Knight's service, by which lands were held formerly in England.

By this successful campaign, tranquillity seemed to be perfectly restored, the Soubah more firmly seated in his government, and the friendship between him and the English cemented.

Before I close the scene of those glorious successes, let me take a view of the figure the English made at this period. No longer considered as mere merchants, they were now thought the umpires of Indostan. So great was the reputation of our arms, that the Visir himself pressed the Colonel, by his agents, to march up to Dehli; and the Emperor sent him an elephant, a vest of honour, and a tiara, which is the usual present to persons of the highest rank. We were not only esteemed for our military achievements, but also for the steady and inviolable attachment we had shown to the Soubah and all those whose cause we had espoused, which made them set the highest value on our friendship. Wherever the Colonel went, he established such a character for bravery, steadiness and moderation, as made him universally respected and beloved. But these are merely honorary advantages. Those of a more lasting nature, are apparent in the present prosperous state of the Company's affairs. The Company, before this time, has received the whole of that immense sum of one million two hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling, stipulated by the treaty; is in possession of a tract of land, which yields a clear revenue of a hundred thousand pounds sterling per annum, and will, probably, in a few years be raised to twice that sum; enjoys a flourishing trade; sees their whole settlement changed from a state of miserable poverty, to a scene of magnificence; and a great progress made in the structure of a fortification, which, when completed, will,

will, with prudent management, secure those advantages down to the latest posterity.

On the other hand, the French are driven entirely out of those provinces; their fine settlement of Chandernagore is laid level with the earth; the inhabitants are dispersed; and that once flourishing place is so totally ruined, that fifty years peace would hardly recover it, should the Soubah ever permit them to resettle it. And by the happy success of Colonel Forde's expedition, they have not now a foot of land even in those provinces, which, till then, yielded them a revenue of four hundred thousand pounds sterling, out of which they maintained a great force, and remitted yearly a large sum to Pondicherry. These circumstances will, it is apprehended, greatly conduce to the fall of that place, which is all that is wanting to crown our success and ruin the French East India Company, it is probable, for ever.

If this account, which has been the amusement of my leisure hours in a long India voyage, should meet your approbation, I shall think my trouble amply rewarded; and if it will be of any service, I shall readily give you my sentiments on the measures which are proper to be taken at this juncture, for settling the East India affairs on a lasting foundation.

I am, etc.

